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Roleplaying to the Max

My grandfather was as stubborn as they come. Mulish doesn't even begin to describe how obstinate he could be. It didn't matter if you showed him documented evidence that he was wrong. He just wouldn't change his mind. That said, he was thoughtful, caring, and played board games with his grandsons at any hour of the day, so I'm not complaining. Everyone knows someone like this, and most gamers know someone who roleplays like this in their games.

I call this person a Roleplaying Mule. This person settles on a character in a unique manner. The RM commits to a vision in his head and flat-out refuses to deviate from it. The vision must be preserved at all costs ... even if doing so means that the rest of the table suffers.

Before I go any further, let me say for the record that I'm a big fan of a well-roleplayed character. I enjoy coming up with my character's personality even more than I like picking his feats and powers. And I'm a power gamer, so picking feats and powers is like picking which cupcake to have—they're all so delicious! Finding a hook, a role to play, so to speak, is great, but it's important to remember that the game is a cooperative experience. You have your fellow players to consider.

The RM doesn't do this. He makes deliberate character choices that can hamper other characters at the table. Playing a character to extremes can be fun, and a little interparty conflict can provide hours of entertainment. One of my favorite characters frequently misconstrued nearly everything his allies said, but I learned to watch that I don't cross the fine line between occasionally-irritating-in-an-amusing way to outright infuriating.

Examples of the RM abound. One version of the character pursues his goals so single-mindedly that he ignores everything that anyone else at the table is trying to accomplish. He always want to turn left, even if the rest of the party is headed right. Another is the player who builds a character in direct opposition to another character. The "I hate elves" RM falls into this camp, made worse when he does so knowing he's joining a party with an elf character in it. Another RM deliberately feigns ignorance to the detriment of his party. "I don't think my character will understand the message, so I'm just not going to relay it."

But the worst examples of RMs, as far as I'm concerned, are the adventurers who have no right adventuring at all ("My character's an agoraphobe and never leaves the house") or who are sociopaths ("I kill the paladin in his sleep" or "I steal the wizard's gold when he's not looking"). Why are these people adventurers? Who would want to hang out with them? If a player can't come up with a healthy reason why her character is palling around with the party, odds are good he's in it for the wrong reason.

All of these players typically fall back on the defense of, "that's what my character would do." There are variants: "I don't think my character would know that." Or "This is the character I made." They boil down to the same excuse, and regardless of the rationale, it's lame.

This is a cooperative game. Neither players nor characters should interact like obnoxious teenagers playing Halo. The people you're gaming with are friends, and basic rules of consideration still apply.

Sometimes, the best thing for the game is to actually act out of character. Just like in real life, sometimes we're faced with a situation that forces us to behave in an uncharacteristic way. Just as we all have choices to make, and sometimes we give up our preferences for another, we should follow the same principles in game. Stubbornly sticking to your guns when it comes to your character's personality can end up robbing another player—or maybe all of them—of their chance to have a good time. If you're an extreme roleplayer, keep that in mind next time that defensive thought, "Well that's what my character would do" springs to your mind. Maybe it is, but ... maybe not this time.

How about your game? Tell us about your favorite oddball character at dndinsider@wizards.com. We'd love to hear from you!

Hybrid Characters

By Mike Mearls

Commentary by Andy Collins and Mike Mearls

COMMENTARY

Andy Collins: At the risk of generalization, there are two kinds of characters who blend aspects of multiple classes: the dabbler and the fusion. The dabbler is the character who stays mostly true to his or her primary class, but grabs a small sample of another class's talents. In 3rd Edition, the 6th-level fighter/2nd-level rogue qualified as a dabbler. He had a little sneak attack, a bunch of extra skill points, trapfinding, and evasion. (I actually had to go back to my *Player's Handbook v.3.5* to confirm all those, which is a little bit sad.) No one would doubt that this character is mostly fighter, but at the same time anyone paying attention would recognize the rogue elements as well.

The fusion character mixes roughly equal portions of two classes, creating a unique combination that often fits the mold neither of one class nor the other. If you played a 4th-level fighter/4th-level cleric in 3rd Edition D&D, you played a fusion character. You certainly weren't a true cleric, but you had enough spells to cast that it was hard to call you a fighter.

Mike Mearls: 3rd Edition tried to support both of these characters with the same system. It worked well for some builds, but also encouraged some truly bizarre character constructions (characters with levels in five or more classes weren't that unusual).

AC: In 4th Edition, we decided to support the dabbler archetype first and most strongly. Not only did we believe that more characters fell into that category than the fusion category, but we also worried about the lengths required to twist our brand-new class and role framework into a fusion-supporting system. We knew that simple multiclassing couldn't encompass every combination of character abilities that players had come to know and love (or hate, in some cases) from previous editions of the game, but we didn't want to sacrifice our new class structure to support fusion multiclassing.

MM: Back during the 4E design period I fought for a more robust multiclassing system that would encompass fusion characters, but ultimately the realities of time and complexity won the day. Andy promised that we'd explore a fusion system later on, when everyone became more comfortable tweaking the familiar character tropes.

AC: Because we all remembered this discussion, when Mike was tabbed to lead the design on *Player's Handbook 3*, it came as no surprise to see the hybrid system—then called "dual-class"—show up in his outline.

You've seen playtest versions of the hybrid rules, but now we can present the final version slated for inclusion in *Player's Handbook 3*. These rules incorporate feedback from readers just like you.

This debut content also presents the hybrid artificer class for the first time ever. You'll have to wait for *Player's Handbook 3* for the hybrid versions of the classes appearing in that book. We haven't forgotten about the assassin; that class gets its own special hybrid treatment right here in the pages of *Dragon* magazine soon enough.

A young apprentice wizard is forced into the military when her hometown is sacked by orcs. After leading a squadron in the baron's army for three months to drive back the invading horde, she retires from military service to enter an adventuring career as a warlord/wizard.

A lone barbarian from the far north travels to the gleaming cities of the south, where a local thieves' guild recruits him as hired muscle. Along the way, he picks up several tricks of cunning and wit, all the better to defeat those who think him nothing more than a savage. When he later becomes an adventurer, this barbarian/rogue relies on both his talents as a burglar and his ability to unleash the raging beast that still lurks within his heart.

The hybrid character rules allow you to combine elements of two character classes into a whole. Effectively, you create a brand-new class from portions of two classes. Like the multiclass feats introduced in the *Player's Handbook*, these rules let you reflect a more varied array of character abilities than traditional classes do. Whether you're doing this to reflect your character's elaborate backstory, to combine different mechanical elements to create a potent new combination, or to fill out a group that needs just a little something extra, the end result is the same: Your hybrid character gives up depth of ability in exchange for greater flexibility.

Hybrids and Roles

When you combine two classes of the same role (such as fighter and paladin), you can expect your character to be about as effective in filling that role as a single-class character of the same role.

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Combining two classes of different roles, however, creates a character who can operate reasonably well in two different roles in certain situations. This flexibility lets you adjust your tactics—and your contribution—from round to round, based on the particular challenges you face.

A potential downside is that you probably can't fill either role through an entire encounter. A cleric/rogue, for example, might be able to heal half as often as a normal cleric and deal striker-level damage with only some attacks.

Group Building

When adding a hybrid character to an adventuring group, it's best if at least one (if not both) of the roles normally filled by your two classes are also filled by another character in the group. For example, your cleric/rogue won't feel quite as lacking in healing or damage output if you also have a warlord and a ranger in the group. A hybrid character makes a great fifth or sixth group member, since key roles are likely covered by your allies.

A hybrid character can also be a great way to deal with a smaller-than-normal group. If your group has only two or three characters, having one or two hybrid characters can help you fill the missing roles. Your group won't fill the roles as completely as a full-sized group would, but half a leader is usually better than no leader at all.

Creating a Hybrid Character

If you want to make a hybrid character, pick the two classes that you want to combine, and then read the entries for the hybrid versions of them. This section provides hybrid versions of the classes in the *Player's Handbook* and *Player's Handbook 2* as well as the swordmage class from the *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide* and the artificer class from the *Eberron Player's Guide*. The information below details how to combine the elements of the two hybrid classes you choose.

Armor Proficiencies: You start with only the armor proficiencies that are possessed by both of your classes. For example, a fighter/rogue initially has proficiency with cloth armor and leather armor only.

COMMENTARY
AC: Too many broken combos of no armor / heavy armor classes during playtesting showed us that we had to scale back armor proficiencies, essentially treating them as a class feature to restrict for the purpose of balance. It's not as elegant a solution as I'd prefer, but it's certainly functional.

Weapon Proficiencies: Combine the weapon proficiencies given for each of your classes. For example, a cleric/rogue starts with proficiency with simple melee weapons (including the dagger), simple ranged weapons (including the crossbow and the sling), shuriken, and short swords.

Implements: You can wield the implements of both classes, and you can use implement powers from either class (and from those classes' paragon paths) through the implements of either class. For example, a cleric/warlock can use implement powers from either class through holy symbols, rods, and wands.

Bonus to Defense: You gain the bonuses to defenses noted in both hybrid class entries. Bonuses to the same defense add together. Some hybrid class entries give you a choice of which defense to apply a bonus to.

How Does It Work?

The hybrid character rules break down each class into parts. The hybrid version of a class provides a portion of the game benefits of the normal class (hit points, defenses, proficiencies, class features, and so forth). When combined with the hybrid version of another class, these two partial classes create a whole class.

Because character classes aren't designed to be broken down and recombined in this way, not every hybrid is equally effective. Different combinations of roles, key ability scores, types of attacks, and other elements can result in different degrees of efficacy.

For that reason, this section provides advice on how to build an effective hybrid character. You can ignore this advice in order to create a hybrid that fits your mental image of your character precisely, but that character might prove less effective than your nonhybrid allies.

COMMENTARY
MM: Just in case anyone's wondering, there's no question that the hybrid system introduced complications. We built character classes to serve three masters: compelling story, defined party roles, and exciting game play (in no particular order). Those priorities had to outweigh any theoretical fusion system that might come along later.

Hit Points at 1st Level: To determine your hit points at 1st level, add together the hit points at 1st level noted in both hybrid class entries, and round fractions down. Then add your Constitution score to the result.

Hit Points per Level Gained: To determine the hit points you gain at each new level, add together the values noted in each of your hybrid class entries, and round fractions down. For example, a cleric/fighter gains 5 hit points at each new level (2.5 for cleric + 3 for fighter, rounded down).

COMMENTARY
AC: For a while we didn't include fractions in each class's hit point and healing surge calculation (effectively rounding down before you added them together). This was easier to explain and cleaner to write, but it left too many combos of leaders and strikers running around with wizard hit points, which wasn't fun. Fun trumped ease of description.

Healing Surges per Day: Add together the healing surges per day noted in both hybrid class entries, and round fractions down. Then add your Constitution modifier to the result.

Class Skills: To create your list of class skills, combine the class skills noted for the two hybrid classes.

Trained Skills: You gain three trained skills, chosen from your list of class skills. Some hybrid class entries grant extra trained skills, which must be taken from that class's skills list, not from the combined list.

Class Features: You gain all the class features in both hybrid class entries.

If a class feature has the word "hybrid" in parentheses after its name, it is a modified version of the class feature but still counts as that class feature for the purpose of meeting prerequisites.

Hybrid Talent Options: Each hybrid class entry includes one or more Hybrid Talent options. These options become available when you select the Hybrid Talent feat.

Starting Powers: As a hybrid character, you start with the following powers.

At-Will: Choose two 1st-level at-will attack powers, one from each class.

Encounter: You gain one 1st-level encounter attack power, chosen from either of your hybrid classes.

Daily: You gain one 1st-level daily attack power, chosen from either of your hybrid classes.

Gaining Additional Powers: When you reach a new level and gain an encounter attack power, a daily attack power, or a utility power, you can choose that power from either class. However, if you have at least two powers in the same category (at-will attack, encounter attack, daily attack, or utility), at least one of those powers must come from each of your hybrid classes. For example, if you have two encounter attack powers, one of the powers must be from one of your hybrid classes, and the other power must be from your other hybrid class.

Even if you later change your powers through retraining, power-swap feats, or some other means, you must retain at least one power in each of those four categories from both of your classes (see "Retraining," below, for how hybrid characters use the retraining rules).

Example: Bergen, a 1st-level fighter/rogue, wants a mixture of powers from his two classes. He selects *cleave* (fighter) and *deft strike* (rogue) as his at-will attack powers. He then selects *steel serpent strike* (fighter) as his 1st-level encounter attack power and *blinding barrage* (rogue) as his 1st-level daily attack power.

When Bergen reaches 3rd level and gains another encounter attack power, he must select the new power from the rogue class, since he already has a fighter encounter attack power. Alternatively, he could use retraining to replace *steel serpent strike* with *king's castle*, a 1st-level rogue encounter attack power, and then choose a 3rd-level fighter encounter attack power.

When Bergen reaches 7th level, he can choose his new encounter attack power from either class, since he already has an encounter attack power from each.

Special Rules

Hybrid characters interact with some game rules in exceptional ways.

Meeting Prerequisites

A hybrid character is considered a member of both classes, and has those classes' roles. For example, a fighter/wizard can take feats and paragon paths that have the fighter or the wizard class as a prerequisite.

As noted in some hybrid class entries, a hybrid character receives a modified version of a class feature. Such a class feature counts as the full-fledged feature for the purpose of meeting prerequisites and applying various game options.

Multiclass Feats

A hybrid character can select multiclass feats. The rules for multiclassing still apply: You can't take multiclass feats for a class you already belong to, which includes both of your hybrid classes.

Assigning Ability Scores

When you combine two classes to build your hybrid character, try to choose classes that have complementary key abilities, secondary abilities, or both. Doing this helps your character remain effective.

For example, fighters and paladins share a key ability: Strength. This means a fighter/paladin hybrid character can select and use attack powers from both classes easily. The two classes also share a secondary ability: Wisdom. If the hybrid character has a high Wisdom score, he or she can benefit from various Wisdom-based options available to both classes, such as the paladin's *radiant smite* power and the fighter's Combat Superiority class feature.

If you choose two classes that have different key abilities, make sure that both of the ability scores are high enough that you can use your powers and class features effectively. For instance, a fighter/rogue needs a good Dexterity score (to use rogue attack powers) as well as a good Strength score (to use fighter powers).

When you play a hybrid character, it becomes even more important to use your racial ability score bonuses to their best effect. You'll get the most value if you match your two classes' key abilities to a set of racial ability score bonuses (such as a half-orc fighter/rogue).

Something to consider when assigning ability scores: If you select two classes whose key abilities are in the same defense pair (such as Dexterity and Intelligence), one or two of your defenses are likely to be lower than normal. This disadvantage can be overcome through feats and magic items, or you can play it up as a character quirk.

Here are some good ability score arrays to use when creating a hybrid character:

SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY
18	STR Strength	11	DEX Dexterity	10	WIS Wisdom
14	CON Constitution	10	INT Intelligence	8	CHA Charisma

If your key abilities match, you can probably get away with this top-heavy ability score array, though you're probably sacrificing benefits derived from secondary abilities. A swordmage/wizard using this array would likely place the 18 in Intelligence and the 14 in whichever secondary ability mattered most.

SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY
16	STR Strength	12	DEX Dexterity	10	WIS Wisdom
16	CON Constitution	11	INT Intelligence	8	CHA Charisma

This array works well for hybrid characters who have two key abilities, particularly if those overlap with secondary abilities. A fighter/swordmage might like this array, putting one 16 in Strength and the other in Intelligence.

SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY
16	STR Strength	14	DEX Dexterity	10	WIS Wisdom
14	CON Constitution	13	INT Intelligence	8	CHA Charisma

This array is good for hybrid characters who want attack powers drawing on three or more abilities, such as a rogue/warlock who wants to select attack powers based on Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma.

Paragon Tier Hybrids

Rather than take a paragon path at 11th level, a hybrid character can choose to gain more powers from his or her classes. If you choose this option, you gain several benefits.

At 11th level, you gain Hybrid Talent as a bonus feat, even if you already have it.

In place of the paragon path encounter attack power gained at 11th level, you can select an encounter attack power of 7th level or lower from either of your hybrid classes.

In place of the paragon path utility power gained at 12th level, you can select a utility power of 10th level or lower from either of your hybrid classes.

COMMENTARY

AC: The hybrid system went through many iterations. A few of these were playtested externally (either through the RPGA or on *D&D Insider*), so you've likely seen at least one other version of the rules. At various points the hybrid system lurched between "OMG LOOK AT THIS BROKEN COMBO I FOUND" and "why would anyone want to use this," but each test gave us useful information that helped hone the final rules.

As a side note, I'm always happier to get back playtest reports citing a new option as being too good than not good enough. It's usually easier to scale power back than to inch forward toward the precipice of "too good."

In place of the paragon path daily attack power gained at 20th level, you can select a daily attack power of 19th level or lower from either of your hybrid classes.

COMMENTARY
AC: We considered putting multiclass feats off-limits to hybrid characters, but we couldn't come up with anything more compelling than, "this could get confusing for players," which is sort of the equivalent of "You'll shoot your eye out, kid." Sometimes it's a good answer, but we didn't need it here.

Racial Traits

Some races grant benefits based on a class. As long as you remember that you are a member of both of your classes, these benefits should be easy to adjudicate. Here are two examples.

Dilettante (Half-Elf): You can't choose the 1st-level at-will attack power from either of your hybrid classes.

Bonus At-Will Power (Human): You choose the extra 1st-level at-will attack power from either of your hybrid classes.

Retraining

When you use retraining (*Player's Handbook*, page 28) to replace a power from one of your hybrid classes, the new power can be from either of your hybrid classes, as long as the new power is of the same type and of the same level or lower as the old power. In addition, the replacement must follow the rules for a hybrid character gaining powers (see "Creating a Hybrid Character," above).

You cannot use retraining to replace one of your hybrid classes with a different hybrid class. You cannot, for example, use retraining to change from cleric/fighter to fighter/paladin.

Trading Class Features

A hybrid character can't trade a hybrid version of a class feature for a nonhybrid version of a class feature, unless a hybrid class entry expressly allows the trade.

Proceed with Care

The system of classes and roles in D&D is designed to ensure that every character has a clear purpose at the table and that no character can easily become marginalized by poor choices made in character creation.

The hybrid character system discards many of the safeguards built into the normal class system. Even though every effort has been made to craft a hybrid system that creates characters that are as viable as their single-class comrades, the sheer number of combinations available ensures that some combinations might feel less effective than others.

If you find that your hybrid character isn't as effective as you had expected, work with your DM to find a solution. You might choose to combine a different pair of classes, to use the multiclass system, or to change to a nonhybrid character.

COMMENTARY
AC: Some playtesters chafed when they saw notes like this in the early documents. We don't normally put in quite so much hand-holding in our sourcebooks, but I didn't want anyone just stumbling into this system thinking that it had the same safeguards against bad choices that we worked to put into the core rules. I firmly believe that making a character that looks cool but actually sucks can easily put a new player off from playing again.

In other words, if you want to make a bizarre hybrid combo that relies on five different ability scores, go ahead. But do it with your eyes open.

Hybrid Artificer

Whether student or tinkerer, you have learned many tricks for imbuing magic into objects and creatures. Your expertise is spotty, however, with many gaps that a true artificer might scoff at. Of course, you know plenty of tricks beyond the skill of that artificer.

Why does your knowledge have such gaps? Do you lack the discipline or talent to master some of the formulas and recipes of the artificer? Or have you recognized that technical skills must be supplemented with other abilities?

As a hybrid artificer, you retain some of the artificer's healing ability, but you trade away magic item manipulation in exchange for another class's abilities.

Class Traits

Role: Leader
Power Source: Arcane
Key Abilities: Intelligence, Constitution, Wisdom

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, simple ranged
Implements: Rods, staffs, wands
Bonus to Defense: +1 Fortitude or Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 6
Hit Points per Level Gained: 2.5
Healing Surges per Day: 3

Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Dungeoneering (Wis), Heal (Wis), History (Int), Perception (Wis), Thievery (Dex)

Class Features: Healing Infusion (hybrid)
Hybrid Talent Options: Arcane Empowerment, Arcane Rejuvenation

Hybrid vs. Multiclass

Both the hybrid character system and the multiclass system allow a character to select powers and class features from multiple classes. However, these two systems offer different advantages and disadvantages, which help make both choices interesting.

- A multiclass character doesn't give up any class features. However, he or she must spend feats to dabble in a second class, whereas a hybrid character doesn't need to spend any feats to do so.
- A hybrid character can begin play with a more varied array of class features and powers than a multiclass character can.
- A hybrid character whose classes have different roles is capable of temporarily but effectively stepping into either role, but can't replace a nonhybrid character in either role. A multiclass character fills one role entirely—the role of his or her main class—and can occasionally fill another role, but not as well as a hybrid character can.
- The hybrid character system is a more effective way of describing a character who has an unusual backstory than the multiclass system is. A hybrid character can begin his or her adventuring career having already mixed two very different classes. In contrast, a multiclass character starts out concentrated on a single class and slowly expands into another class.

It's up to you to decide which of these two systems better describes your character's unique mixture of class features, powers, and backstory.

Class Feature

Hybrid artificers have the following class feature.

Healing Infusion (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the artificer class feature (*Eberron Player's Guide*, page 45), except that you can create only one healing infusion at the end of each extended rest.

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Arcane Empowerment: This class feature functions exactly as the artificer class feature (*Eberron Player's Guide*, page 44).

Arcane Rejuvenation: This class feature functions exactly as the artificer class feature (*Eberron Player's Guide*, page 44).

Suggested Combinations

The artificer/wizard is a master of arcane secrets, using Intelligence to attack enemies and heal allies.

The artificer/swordmage might prefer melee powers. Choose Constitution as your secondary ability score to maximize synergy between the two classes.

The artificer/warlock can be an effective mix of leadership and damage-dealing, particularly if you set Intelligence and Constitution as your two highest ability scores.

COMMMENTARY

AC: The "Suggested Combinations" entries were fun to write. I enjoyed coming up with one or two mechanically optimal combinations, plus one or two oddball or very-flavorful-yet-difficult-to-pull-off combos. If you read through every class's entry, they can get a bit onerous, but I expect most folks to be interested only in a few classes at a time.

Hybrid Avenger

You blend secret monastic training with other talents to become a special servant of the gods. Do your vows represent an earlier stage of your life, all but left behind, or a newfound mission?

As a hybrid avenger, you pursue your foes with great skill, but you must sacrifice some of your offensive and defensive capabilities to dabble in a second class.

Class Traits

Role: Striker
Power Source: Divine
Key Abilities: Wisdom, Dexterity, Intelligence

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, military melee, simple ranged
Implements: Holy symbols
Bonus to Defense: +1 Fortitude, Reflex, or Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 7
Hit Points per Level Gained: 3
Healing Surges per Day: 3.5

Class Skills: Acrobatics (Dex), Athletics (Str), Endurance (Con), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Perception (Wis), Religion (Int), Stealth (Dex), Streetwise (Cha)
Class Features: Oath of enmity (hybrid)
Hybrid Talent Options: Armor of Faith, Avenger's Censure (hybrid), Channel Divinity (hybrid)

Class Feature

Hybrid avengers have the following class feature.

Oath of Enmity (Hybrid): You gain the avenger power *oath of enmity* (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 34). The power functions as normal, except that you can apply the effect only when you make a melee attack using an avenger power or an avenger paragon path power.

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Armor of Faith: This class feature functions exactly as the avenger class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 33).

Avenger's Censure (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the avenger class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 33), except that the bonus to damage rolls applies only to your avenger powers and avenger paragon path powers.

Channel Divinity (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the avenger class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 33), except that you start with a single avenger Channel Divinity power of your choice.

Suggested Combinations

The avenger/invoker enjoys a variety of melee and nonmelee attacks, all based on Wisdom. You can control enemies at a distance, making it even easier for you to hunt down your prey.

The avenger/wizard seems like an unusual combination at first glance, but both classes suggest the study of secret lore. With good Wisdom and Intelligence scores, you can achieve the same variety of attacks as an avenger/invoker can.

COMMENTARY

AC: For hybrid strikers, our biggest challenge was ensuring that the character couldn't deal striker-level damage with every attack. (Because that just makes you a striker with extra benefits.) In most cases, that led to the "when using a [classname] power" restriction, like the one appearing in the avenger's Oath of Enmity (Hybrid) class feature. Since a hybrid character has only about 1/3 to 2/3 of his or her powers from any given class, this means that if the character wants to act like a non-striker class, he or she doesn't get striker damage.

Hybrid Barbarian

In your heart, you know the power of rage. However, your link to the primal spirits that unleash these rages isn't quite as strong as a typical barbarian's. Perhaps you have been away from the tribe for too long, or maybe you have only begun to harness primal power.

Regardless of the reason, as a hybrid barbarian you can't unleash the primal rage in your heart quite as easily as a full member of that class can, but you remain capable of occasional frenzied bursts of energy.

COMMENTARY

MM: The barbarian didn't need the same fix as the avenger and other strikers, since the class doesn't have a striker-damage class feature—the extra damage is built into the class's attack powers, instead. When you use a barbarian power, you're being a striker.

Class Traits

Role: Striker
Power Source: Primal
Key Abilities: Strength, Constitution, Charisma

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather, hide
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, military melee
Bonus to Defense: +1 Fortitude

Hit Points at 1st Level: 7.5
Hit Points per Level Gained: 3
Healing Surges per Day: 4

Class Skills: Acrobatics (Dex), Athletics (Str), Endurance (Con), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Nature (Wis), Perception (Wis)

Class Features: Rampage
Hybrid Talent Options: Barbarian Armored Agility, Feral Might

Class Feature

Hybrid barbarians have the following class feature.

Rampage: This class feature functions exactly as the barbarian class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 49).

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Barbarian Armored Agility: You gain the Barbarian Agility class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 49). You also gain proficiency with leather armor and hide armor.

Feral Might: This class feature functions exactly as the barbarian class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 49).

Suggested Combinations

The hybrid barbarian can be joined with the hybrid fighter for great durability and melee prowess. Choose a Hybrid Talent option to improve your AC, either Barbarian Armored Agility or Fighter Armor Proficiency.

If you are a barbarian/cleric who chooses Strength-based healing powers, you gain valuable healing capability that you can use to keep yourself fighting.

A barbarian/ranger is a potent combatant. Such a character can use barbarian powers requiring a two-handed weapon as well as ranger powers requiring two melee weapons.

Hybrid Bard

You are a dabbler among dabblers. The versatility of the typical bard isn't enough for you, so you have branched out even further. Alternatively, you might have been incapable of mastering the bard's full repertoire of performance and inspiration and have chosen to explore other areas to expand your abilities.

As a hybrid bard, you retain some of the bard's healing power, but trade away much of that class's innate versatility in exchange for access to another class's tricks.

Class Traits

Role: Leader
Power Source: Arcane
Key Abilities: Charisma, Intelligence, Constitution

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather, hide, chainmail; light shield
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, longsword, scimitar, short sword, simple ranged, military ranged
Implements: Wands
Bonus to Defense: +1 Reflex or Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 6
Hit Points per Level Gained: 2.5
Healing Surges per Day: 3.5

Class Skills: Acrobatics (Dex), Arcana (Int), Athletics (Str), Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Dungeoneering (Wis), Heal (Wis), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Nature (Wis), Perception (Wis), Religion (Int), Streetwise (Cha)
Extra Trained Skill: Choose an extra trained skill from the class skills list above.

Class Features: Majestic word (hybrid), Skill Versatility
Hybrid Talent Options: Bard Armor Proficiency, Bardic Virtue, Song of Rest, words of friendship

COMMENTARY

AC: Most hybrid characters have only three trained skills. We felt that was a reasonable tradeoff for having a greatly expanded class skill list, and also for the other benefits you gain via the hybrid system.

Some classes, however, deserved more skills than that. Hence the "Extra Trained Skill" line for the bard and a few others, which recognizes that a long list of trained skills is a hidden class feature.

I just now realized that we could have added "gain training in one skill listed on either of your class skill lists" to the Hybrid Talent feat without seriously unbalancing that feat. Stupid hindsight.

Class Features

Hybrid bards have the following class features.

Majestic Word (Hybrid): You gain the bard power *majestic word* (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 68). The power functions as normal, except that you can use it only once per encounter.

Skill Versatility: This class feature functions exactly as the bard class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 67).

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Bard Armor Proficiency: You gain proficiency with leather armor, hide armor, chainmail, and light shields.

Bardic Virtue: This class feature functions exactly as the bard class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 67).

Song of Rest: This class feature functions exactly as the bard class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 67).

Words of Friendship: You gain the bard power *words of friendship* (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 68).

Suggested Combinations

The bard and warlock classes make a good hybrid combination, with complete overlap between primary and secondary abilities. Focus on ranged implement attacks when choosing bard powers.

A bard/paladin can mix leadership and defense and maintain accuracy with Charisma attack powers. You'll need a little help with AC, particularly if you're the only defender in the group.

Combining a bard with a warlord can create a leader who has powers that move allies and enemies around the battlefield with ease.

Hybrid Cleric

By learning talents beyond those taught to the typical cleric, you have honed yourself into a distinctive divine leader. Your cleric training might represent a youthful devotion or a newly discovered dedication to a god.

As a hybrid cleric, you offer useful healing to a group, although less than a full-fledged cleric could. You also give up the versatility of the Channel Divinity and Ritual Casting class features in order to master new talents.

Class Traits

Role: Leader
Power Source: Divine
Key Abilities: Wisdom, Strength, Charisma

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather, hide, chainmail
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, simple ranged
Implements: Holy symbols
Bonus to Defense: +1 Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 6
Hit Points per Level Gained: 2.5
Healing Surges per Day: 3.5

Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Religion (Int)

Class Features: Healer's Lore, healing word (hybrid)
Hybrid Talent Options: Cleric Armor Proficiency, Channel Divinity (hybrid)

COMMENTARY
AC: Leaders were the easiest classes to hybridize, since their core class feature—healing powers—tend to follow a similar form across all classes in the role. In each case, we tried to add a small but useful feature to keep them from looking too alike.

Class Features

Hybrid clerics have the following class features.

Healer's Lore: This class feature functions exactly as the cleric class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 61).

Healing Word (Hybrid): You gain the cleric power *healing word* (*Player's Handbook*, page 62). The power functions as normal, except that you can use it only once per encounter.

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Cleric Armor Proficiency: You gain proficiency with leather armor, hide armor, and chainmail.

Channel Divinity (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the cleric class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 61), except that you start with a single cleric Channel Divinity power of your choice.

Suggested Combinations

Cleric/fighter and cleric/paladin offer similar benefits: a great mix of Strength-based melee attacks, high durability, and healing powers to keep yourself and your allies in the fight.

A cleric/invoker stays at the back of the party, launching helpful ranged attacks and devastating area blasts from a position of relative safety.

A cleric/warlord combines leader powers from two different classes to make an effective whole.

Hybrid Druid

Your ability to take on the form of a beast marks you unmistakably as a druid, but your bond to the spirits of nature remains somewhat tenuous. Do your druid powers stem from an innate but undeveloped link to primal spirits? Or have you just begun to explore the mysteries of nature after a life spent in other pursuits?

As a hybrid druid, you can assume beast form and likely know powers useful in that form. However, you sacrifice some connections to the natural world—including Primal Aspect and Ritual Casting—to explore another class's talents.

COMMENTARY
AC: Like most controllers, the druid's role rests in its powers, not its class features. We settled on Wild Shape as the most iconic feature to grant the hybrid druid—not a tough choice.

Class Traits

Role: Controller
Power Source: Primal
Key Abilities: Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather, hide
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, simple ranged
Implements: Staffs, totems
Bonus to Defense: +1 Reflex or Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 6
Hit Points per Level Gained: 2.5
Healing Surges per Day: 3.5

Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Athletics (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Endurance (Con), Heal (Wis), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Nature (Wis), Perception (Wis)

Class Features: Wild shape
Hybrid Talent Options: Druid Armor Proficiency, Primal Aspect

Class Feature

Hybrid druids have the following class feature.

Wild Shape: You gain the druid power *wild shape* (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 84).

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Druid Armor Proficiency: You gain proficiency with leather armor and hide armor.

Primal Aspect: This class feature functions exactly as the druid class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 83).

Selecting Druid Powers

Despite automatically gaining the *wild shape* power, a hybrid druid doesn't automatically come with beast form powers; you must select them.

At 1st level, you should consider selecting a beast form power as your lone druid at-will attack power. You can use your other at-will attack power in your humanoid form.

If you don't have any beast form powers, you're wasting *wild shape*, so include beast form powers among your attack powers and utility powers.

Suggested Combinations

The druid/shaman is an ideal combination of primal classes, mixing the druid's control and melee powers with the shaman's leadership.

A druid/invoker mixes powers and features from two different Wisdom-based controller classes and can offer an interesting character background: What brought you to mesh the ancient power of the gods with the might of primal spirits?

Hybrid druids who want to increase their deadliness in melee should consider the avenger, ranger, and rogue classes.

Hybrid Fighter

You call on your martial training to guard allies and strike down enemies, and because of your hybrid training, you have tricks up your sleeve that your enemies don't expect.

Many hybrid fighters learned their martial talents in a military or a mercenary organization, but these experiences typically represent only a portion of the character's background. Perhaps your character has moved on from military service to a new area of expertise, or maybe you have taken up the sword as part of a new direction in your life after months or years of other studies.

As a hybrid fighter, you protect your comrades as any other defender does: with durability, martial prowess, and battlefield control. However, you give up some of the fighter's talent with weapons, and you can't mark enemies with all your powers.

COMMENTARY
AC: Defenders, like strikers, typically rely on a particular class feature to fully realize their role. That led to the hybrid versions of defender marking features, which apply the mark only when using that class's powers. The fighter/rogue can mark like a fighter or deal damage like a striker, but can't do both with the same attack. This was important to preserve the single-classed defender's place in the game; if a fighter/rogue could mark as well as a fighter and also dealt lots of extra damage, why would you play a fighter?

Class Traits

Role: Defender
Power Source: Martial
Key Abilities: Strength, Dexterity, Wisdom, Constitution

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather, hide, chainmail, scale; light shield, heavy shield
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, military melee, simple ranged, military ranged
Bonus to Defense: +1 Fortitude

Hit Points at 1st Level: 7.5
Hit Points per Level Gained: 3
Healing Surges per Day: 4.5

Class Skills: Athletics (Str), Endurance (Con), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Streetwise (Cha)

Class Features: Combat Challenge (hybrid)
Hybrid Talent Options: Combat Specialty, Fighter Armor Proficiency, Fighter Combat Talent

Class Feature

Hybrid fighters have the following class feature.

Combat Challenge (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the fighter class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 76), except that you can use it to mark only enemies you attack using fighter powers and fighter paragon path powers.

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Combat Specialty: When you select this option, you choose one of the following class features.

Combat Agility: This class feature functions exactly as the fighter class feature (*Martial Power 2*, page 6).

Combat Superiority: This class feature functions exactly as the fighter class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 76).

Fighter Armor Proficiency: You gain proficiency with leather armor, hide armor, chainmail, scale armor, light shields, and heavy shields.

Fighter Combat Talent: When you select this option, you choose one of the following class features.

Battlerager Vigor: This class feature functions as the fighter class feature (*Martial Power*, page 6), except that you don't gain the bonus to damage rolls when wearing light armor or chainmail.

Brawler Style: This class feature functions exactly as the fighter class feature (*Martial Power 2*, page 6).

Fighter Weapon Talent: This class feature functions exactly as the fighter class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 76).

Tempest Technique: This class feature functions exactly as the fighter class feature (*Martial Power*, page 7).

Suggested Combinations

A fighter/paladin draws on two different flavors of tenacity and resilience to create a single defender.

By adding hybrid warlord to hybrid fighter, you can dabble in either tactical genius or inspirational brilliance without giving up melee prowess.

If you're looking to add some nonmelee attacks to your hybrid fighter, consider the hybrid invoker. You don't give up much AC (particularly if you are going to wield a two-handed weapon), and it doesn't hurt for a fighter to have a high Wisdom score.

Hybrid Invoker

You wield the might of the gods, mixed with powers more earthly. But why would you forsake pure devotion to the secrets of the invoker? Did you uncover a mystery that frightened you from wielding such unfettered power? Or has your understanding of divinity only recently awakened?

As a hybrid invoker, you wield the gods' own might to smite your foes. However, you forgo the versatility of Channel Divinity and Ritual Casting to gain the benefits of another class.

COMMENTARY
AC: Class features with built-in choices, such as Divine Covenant, make it much easier to craft new builds for those classes (since you have a ready-made swappable option to tweak). They also make it easier to build hybrid versions of those classes. When reviewing the new builds in *Martial Power 2* for hybridization, we had to create some artificial categories to group features that could be traded for one another. (We didn't want a hybrid fighter to somehow get both Battlerager Vigor and Fighter Weapon Talent, for example.)

Class Traits

Role: Controller
Power Source: Divine
Key Abilities: Wisdom, Constitution, Intelligence

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather, hide, chainmail
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, simple ranged
Implements: Rods, staffs
Bonus to Defense: +1 Fortitude, Reflex, or Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 5
Hit Points per Level Gained: 2
Healing Surges per Day: 3

Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Endurance (Con), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Religion (Int)

Class Features: Covenant Manifestation
Hybrid Talent Options: Channel Divinity (hybrid), Invoker Armor Proficiency

Class Feature

Hybrid invokers have the following class feature.

Covenant Manifestation: You gain the Covenant Manifestation of a Divine Covenant of your choice (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 101).

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Channel Divinity (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the invoker class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 101), except that you start with a single Channel Divinity power. That power is the Channel Divinity power associated with the same Divine Covenant as your Covenant Manifestation.

Invoker Armor Proficiency: You gain proficiency with leather armor, hide armor, and chainmail.

Suggested Combinations

A cleric/invoker offers a divine combination of mass devastation and healing powers.

An invoker/wizard has access to a vast array of controller powers. Consider taking the Hybrid Talent feat to get the Channel Divinity power *preserver's rebuke* in order to make optimal use of a high Intelligence score.

The invoker/shaman mixes two very different traditions of power to great effect on the battlefield.

Hybrid Paladin

You combine the divine authority of a paladin with the talents of another class to become a formidable protector. Many hybrid paladins have only recently pledged themselves to the path of the divine warrior after years spent in other pursuits. A few, however, have recognized that single-minded devotion isn't for them and have expanded their abilities accordingly.

As a hybrid paladin, you bring a useful marking ability and strong melee powers to a group. Like other defenders, you are durable and can protect allies well, but you give up some healing capability to gain the talents of another class.

COMMENTARY
AC: Since the paladin's marking power isn't linked to the use of paladin attack powers (like the fighter's is), we chose instead to reduce the impact of the monster ignoring the mark. Whereas the hybrid fighter marks half as often as a regular fighter, the paladin's mark deals about half the damage of a regular paladin.

Class Traits

Role: Defender
Power Source: Divine
Key Abilities: Strength, Charisma, Wisdom

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather, hide, chainmail, scale, plate; light shield, heavy shield
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, military melee, simple ranged
Implements: Holy symbols
Bonus to Defense: +1 Fortitude, Reflex, or Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 7.5
Hit Points per Level Gained: 3
Healing Surges per Day: 5

Class Skills: Diplomacy (Cha), Endurance (Con), Heal (Wis), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Religion (Int)

Class Features: Divine challenge (hybrid)
Hybrid Talent Options: Channel Divinity (hybrid), Paladin Armor Proficiency

Class Feature

Hybrid paladins have the following class feature.

Divine Challenge (Hybrid): You gain the paladin power *divine challenge* (*Player's Handbook*, page 91). The power functions as normal, except that the following text replaces the power's second paragraph.

> While a target is marked, it takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls for any attack that doesn't include you as a target. The first time it makes an attack that doesn't include you as a target before the start of your next turn, you can use an immediate reaction to deal radiant damage to the target equal to your Charisma modifier. The damage increases to 2 + your Charisma modifier at 11th level and 4 + your Charisma modifier at 21st level.

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Channel Divinity (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the paladin class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 91), except that you start with a single paladin Channel Divinity power of your choice.

Paladin Armor Proficiency: You gain proficiency with leather armor, hide armor, chainmail, scale armor, plate armor, light shields, and heavy shields.

Suggested Combinations

Combining the hybrid fighter with the hybrid paladin keeps your AC up and mixes two different styles of melee control.

It's easy to see the value of combining paladin and cleric, but the paladin/warlord—favoring Charisma over Intelligence—might well be the most valiant battlefield leader imaginable.

Perhaps a strange combination, the paladin/warlock meshes melee prowess with deadly ranged attacks, as well as the ability to keep distant foes marked with *divine challenge*. For this combination, Paladin Armor Proficiency is a must-have option.

Hybrid Ranger

You blend the hunter's dogged pursuit of a quarry with other talents to become a formidable warrior. You might have learned your ranger powers as a young wanderer or an independent scout before taking up new skills. Alternatively, you might have been driven only recently to a life in the wilderness.

You retain the ranger's damage-dealing capability. However, you initially give up the specialization of the ranger's Fighting Style class feature.

Class Traits

Role: Striker
Power Source: Martial
Key Abilities: Strength, Dexterity, Wisdom

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather, hide
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, military melee, simple ranged, military ranged
Bonus to Defense: +1 Fortitude or Reflex

Hit Points at 1st Level: 6
Hit Points per Level Gained: 2.5
Healing Surges per Day: 3

Class Skills: Acrobatics (Dex), Athletics (Str), Dungeoneering (Wis), Endurance (Con), Heal (Wis), Nature (Wis), Perception (Wis), Stealth (Dex)
Extra Trained Skill: Choose an extra trained skill from the class skills list above.

Class Features: Hunter's Quarry (hybrid)
Hybrid Talent Options: Ranger Armor Proficiency, Ranger Combat Talent, Ranger Fighting Style

Class Feature

Hybrid rangers have the following class feature.

Hunter's Quarry (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the ranger class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 104), except that you can deal the extra damage only when you hit your quarry with a ranger power or a ranger paragon path power.

COMMENTARY
MM: I wouldn't be surprised to see 3E fans who fondly remember the druid's animal companion to build hybrid druid/rangers who use Hybrid Talent to pick up Beast Mastery (Hybrid).

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Ranger Armor Proficiency: You gain proficiency with leather armor and hide armor.

Ranger Combat Talent: When you select this option, you choose one of the following class features.

Prime Shot: This class feature functions exactly as the ranger class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 104).

Running Attack: This class feature functions exactly as the ranger class feature (*Martial Power 2*, page 32).

Ranger Fighting Style: When you select this option, you choose one of the following class features.

Archer Fighting Style: This class feature functions exactly as the ranger class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 104).

Beast Mastery (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the ranger class feature (*Martial Power*, page 38), except that the beast takes a –1 penalty to attack rolls and all defenses.

Hunter Fighting Style: This class feature functions exactly as the ranger class feature (*Martial Power 2*, page 32).

Marauder Fighting Style: This class feature functions exactly as the ranger class feature (*Martial Power 2*, page 32).

Two-Blade Fighting Style: This class feature functions exactly as the ranger class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 104).

Suggested Combinations

Fighter/ranger is an effective combination if you focus on melee powers designed for two weapons.

A ranger/rogue is undoubtedly a master damage-dealer. However, when combining the ranger and rogue classes, choose your powers carefully; many of these powers have weapon requirements that don't match up well. For example, if you want to use ranged powers from both classes, you need a crossbow.

Even though the druid/ranger must balance multiple key abilities, this combination adds a fun primal flavor to the hybrid ranger.

Hybrid Rogue

You know the value of a well-placed knife, even if you don't bring the rogue's full complement of talents to every situation.

The most common backstory for a hybrid rogue is a childhood spent on the mean streets of a city, learning enough tricks to stay alive and out of prison. Alternatively, you might have been a respected member of society once, driven to a rogue's life by cruel fate or the machinations of your enemies.

You can be just as sneaky and deadly as a non-hybrid rogue, but you must sacrifice some rogue options to gain options from another class.

AC: The Weapon Talent class feature possessed by both fighters and rogues is a good example of why we felt it necessary to limit most hybrid characters to only a single extra class feature via Hybrid Talent. Stacking up two +1 bonuses to attack rolls is a bit too attractive to be easy to get.

Class Traits

Role: Striker
Power Source: Martial
Key Abilities: Dexterity, Strength, Charisma

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, hand crossbow, shuriken, sling, short sword
Bonus to Defense: +1 Reflex

Hit Points at 1st Level: 6
Hit Points per Level Gained: 2.5
Healing Surges per Day: 3

Class Skills: Acrobatics (Dex), Athletics (Str), Bluff (Cha), Dungeoneering (Wis), Insight (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Perception (Wis), Stealth (Dex), Streetwise (Cha), Thievery (Dex)
Extra Trained Skills: Choose two extra trained skills from the class skills list above.

Class Features: Sneak Attack (hybrid)
Hybrid Talent Options: First Strike, Rogue Combat Talent, Rogue Tactics

Class Feature

Hybrid rogues have the following class feature.

Sneak Attack (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the rogue class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 117), except that you can deal the extra damage only when you hit with a rogue power or a rogue paragon path power.

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

First Strike: This class feature functions exactly as the rogue class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 117).

Rogue Combat Talent: When you select this option, you choose one of the following class features.

Sharpshooter Talent: This class feature functions exactly as the rogue class feature (*Martial Power 2*, page 56).

Rogue Weapon Talent: This class feature functions exactly as the rogue class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 117).

Rogue Tactics: This class feature functions exactly as the rogue class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 117).

Suggested Combinations

Most hybrid rogues need two good ability scores, making hybrid combinations tricky to build.

A rogue/sorcerer can add some devious ranged and burst attacks to a repertoire of melee powers.

Combining the hybrid rogue with the hybrid bard creates a master trickster, who uses Charisma and Dexterity to alternately befuddle and eviscerate foes.

If you prefer brawn over guile, combine the hybrid fighter with the hybrid rogue, choose Rogue Tactics through the Hybrid Talent feat, and then pick either the Brutal Scoundrel class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 117) or the Ruthless Ruffian class feature (*Martial Power*, page 73).

Hybrid Shaman

You have learned to call a spirit companion to your side, yet your connection to primal spirits isn't as strong as a shaman's. What caused this deficiency? Did you flee or fail a rite of passage before its completion, weakening your link to the spirit world? Have you angered the spirits, causing their voices to quiet in your mind?

As a hybrid shaman, you have a spirit companion, as well as the ability to call on spirits for healing, but you give up many of your other talents to pursue a second class.

COMMENTARY
AC: I really like the story implications of the hybrid shaman character. The idea of having a spirit companion without being fully committed to the path of the shaman seems like it would offer some very interesting characterization options.

Class Traits

Role: Leader
Power Source: Primal
Key Abilities: Wisdom, Constitution, Intelligence

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, longspear
Implements: Totems
Bonus to Defense: +1 Fortitude or Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 6
Hit Points per Level Gained: 2.5
Healing Surges per Day: 3.5

Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Athletics (Str), Endurance (Con), Heal (Wis), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Nature (Wis), Perception (Wis), Religion (Int)

Class Features: Companion Spirit (hybrid), healing spirit (hybrid), speak with spirits
Hybrid Talent Options: Spirit Boon, Spirit's Power

Class Features

Hybrid shamans have the following class features.

Companion Spirit (Hybrid): You gain the *call spirit companion* power (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 120).

In addition, choose one of the Companion Spirit options (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 119). You don't gain the Spirit Boon or any of the powers granted by that choice, but you are considered to have the class feature for the purpose of meeting prerequisites and using the benefits tailored for it in certain powers.

Special: To select the at-will attack power associated with a Companion Spirit, you must have the appropriate spirit. For example, you can't select the *stalker's strike* power unless you have Stalker Spirit.

Healing Spirit (Hybrid): You gain the shaman power *healing spirit* (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 120). The power functions as normal, except that you can use it only once per encounter.

Speak with Spirits: You gain the shaman power *speak with spirits* (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 120).

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Spirit Boon: You gain the Spirit Boon of the Companion Spirit option you chose (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 119).

Spirit's Power: You gain the opportunity action power of the Companion Spirit option you chose (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 119).

Suggested Combinations

A druid/shaman has a wide array of options on the battlefield, including area attacks and healing effects.

The hybrid shaman seeking to add melee prowess would do well to consider the hybrid warden.

A melee-focused hybrid shaman might add the hybrid avenger, favoring Intelligence as a secondary ability. Would such a character be more loyal to the primal spirits or to the divine patron who schooled him or her in the arts of retribution?

Hybrid Sorcerer

You know the innate power of arcane magic flowing through your body and blood, yet it does not speak to you as strongly as it would if you were only a sorcerer.

Is your sorcerous bloodline diluted, requiring you to learn other talents to survive as an adventurer? Or do you fear what might happen if you gave yourself fully to the luring pulse of magic?

As a hybrid sorcerer, you're capable of unleashing powerful gouts of arcane fury. But you don't have the resilience of a nonhybrid sorcerer or the other quirks derived from a dedication to sorcerous ways.

AC: Of all the class features we wrestled with during the hybrid development process, the sorcerer's Spell Source was the most annoying. For the class's purposes, the feature works perfectly: your build gives you a clearly delineated and flavorfully different array of class features. But for the hybrid rules—which want to split class features up between free and requiring a feat—the all-in-one feature didn't cooperate well.

I'm not thrilled with the solution we came up with, but it works.

Class Traits

Role: Striker
Power Source: Arcane
Key Abilities: Charisma, Dexterity, Strength

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, simple ranged
Implements: Daggers, staffs
Bonus to Defense: +1 Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 6
Hit Points per Level Gained: 2.5
Healing Surges per Day: 3

Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Athletics (Str), Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Dungeoneering (Wis), Endurance (Con), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Nature (Wis)

Class Features: Sorcerous Power
Hybrid Talent Options: Soul of the Sorcerer

Class Feature

Hybrid sorcerers have the following class feature.

Sorcerous Power: You gain a bonus to the damage rolls of sorcerer powers and sorcerer paragon path powers equal to your Strength or Dexterity modifier. This bonus increases by 2 at 11th level and by 2 again at 21st level.

You choose which modifier to use when you make your character. If you choose Strength, you can use your Strength modifier in place of your Dexterity or Intelligence modifier to determine your AC while you are not wearing heavy armor.

Hybrid Talent Option

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select the following option.

Soul of the Sorcerer: Choose one of the following class features: Dragon Soul (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 137), Soul of the Cosmic Cycle (*Arcane Power*, page 27), Storm Soul (*Arcane Power*, page 26), or Wild Soul (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 137). You gain that class feature, and you are considered to have the associated Spell Source for the purpose of meeting prerequisites and using the benefits tailored for it in certain powers.

Suggested Combinations

One can easily imagine a young sorcerer turning to an Eldritch Pact to gain access to even greater power. Indeed, the sorcerer/warlock is a potent striker who has a variety of attacks, though the classes' secondary abilities don't match up well.

Add the hybrid bard to your hybrid sorcerer to gain healing powers and to heighten your character's reputation as a valorous trickster.

A rogue/sorcerer gains some useful melee attack powers, as long as he or she favors Dexterity.

Hybrid Swordmage

You are no stranger to discipline and training, but you don't have the single-minded commitment to arcane swordplay that a swordmage has. Perhaps in your youth you dabbled in the fundamentals of spell and blade but never dedicated yourself to these studies wholeheartedly. Some hybrid swordmages are new students of ancient magical traditions, coming most often from other arcane or martial traditions.

As a hybrid swordmage, you provide a good mix of melee prowess, battlefield control, and utility, but you can't hold back waves of enemies quite as well as a full-fledged swordmage can.

COMMENTARY
AC: Swordmage Warding seems like an obligatory class feature, but it's effectively the class's armor proficiencies, so it needed to live in the Hybrid Talent Option category. Before we made that decision, hybrid swordmage/wizards were a little too popular in the playtest.

Class Traits

Role: Defender
Power Source: Arcane
Key Abilities: Intelligence, Strength, Constitution

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, military light blades, military heavy blades, simple ranged
Implements: Light blades, heavy blades
Bonus to Defense: +1 Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 7.5
Hit Points per Level Gained: 3
Healing Surges per Day: 4
Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Athletics (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Endurance (Con), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Intimidate (Cha)

Class Features: Swordbond, Swordmage Aegis (hybrid)
Hybrid Talent Options: Swordmage Warding

Class Features

Hybrid swordmages have the following class features.

Swordbond: This class feature functions exactly as the swordmage class feature (*Forgotten Realms Player's Guide*, page 26).

Swordmage Aegis (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the swordmage class feature (*Forgotten Realms Player's Guide*, page 26), except that you can use the power that you choose only once per encounter. However, you regain the use of that power when its target drops to 0 hit points or when its mark is superseded by another mark.

Hybrid Talent Option

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select the following option.

Swordmage Warding: This class feature functions exactly as the swordmage class feature (*Forgotten Realms Player's Guide*, page 26).

Suggested Combinations

Most hybrid swordmages sacrifice some of their defense for greater versatility. Combining the hybrid swordmage with the hybrid wizard gives you a great breadth of powers that share the same key ability.

If you're dedicated to staying in melee, consider adding the hybrid warlord, and put your Intelligence to good use as a tactician.

Although the hybrid swordmage and the hybrid shaman might seem incompatible, the spirit companion and the *spirit's fangs* power give a swordmage an extra option for battlefield control that doesn't require you to stay in the forefront every round.

Hybrid Warden

To stand strong against the defilers of the natural world, you have buttressed your primal tenacity with the capabilities of another class. These capabilities might be other ways of channeling primal spirits, or you might have decided that you can't count on the spirits for all your strength.

As a hybrid warden, you can still punish foes for attacking your allies. However, because you divide your focus between two classes, you must give up some of the class's innate durability (in the form of Font of Life and Guardian Might).

Class Traits

Role: Defender
Power Source: Primal
Key Abilities: Strength, Constitution, Wisdom

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather, hide; light shield, heavy shield
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, military melee, simple ranged
Bonus to Defense: +1 Fortitude or Will
Hit Points at 1st Level: 8.5
Hit Points per Level Gained: 3.5
Healing Surges per Day: 4.5

Class Skills: Athletics (Str), Dungeoneering (Wis), Endurance (Con), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Nature (Wis), Perception (Wis)

Class Features: Nature's Wrath (hybrid)
Hybrid Talent Options: Font of Life, Warden's Armored Might

COMMENTARY
AC: Another defender meant another solution for defender marking. This time, we "halved" the class's marking power by reducing the number of targets marked by the Nature's Wrath feature. If you don't think that marking multiple enemies simultaneously is worth much, then you probably think the hybrid warden gets the best deal of all the defenders.

Class Feature

Hybrid wardens have the following class feature.

Nature's Wrath (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the warden class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 153), except that you mark only one adjacent enemy when you use the class feature's marking ability.

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Font of Life: This class feature functions exactly as the warden class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 153).

Warden's Armored Might: You gain the Guardian Might class feature (*Player's Handbook 2*, page 153). You also gain proficiency with leather armor, hide armor, light shields, and heavy shields.

Suggested Combinations

The fighter/warden offers great durability and melee attacks, though this combination might need some help with AC; Warden's Armored Might or Fighter Armor Proficiency are good fixes.

Adding the hybrid cleric gives the hybrid warden useful healing powers; Wisdom is likely your secondary ability.

Combining the hybrid warden with the hybrid ranger increases your damage output without hurting your AC too much.

Hybrid Warlock

You draw power from snippets of arcane lore wrested from dusty tomes and primeval entities, but these secrets do not wholly define or limit your abilities.

What keeps you from fully embracing the pacts of a warlock? Do you fear the price that such bargains might entail? Or have you not yet managed to pin down the final secret that would unleash your arcane destiny?

As a hybrid warlock, you command excellent damage-dealing ability along with some control powers, but you must give up some of the more notable features of the class, including Pact Boon and Shadow Walk.

COMMENTARY

AC: The warlock's a weird class because both of your at-will powers are assigned by class or feature choice: every warlock has *eldritch blast* and a second at-will attack power depending on the pact he or she chooses. We wanted hybrid warlocks to be able to choose whichever at-will attack power they wanted, rather than putting one or the other of those categories off-limits. However, to get the cool pact boon you must have the associated at-will attack power. This prevents hybrid warlocks from being a complete mish-mash of pacts.

Class Traits

Role: Striker
Power Source: Arcane
Key Abilities: Charisma, Constitution, Intelligence

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, simple ranged
Implements: Rods, wands
Bonus to Defense: +1 Reflex or Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 6
Hit Points per Level Gained: 2.5
Healing Surges per Day: 3

Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Bluff (Cha), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Religion (Int), Streetwise (Cha), Thievery (Dex)

Class Features: Eldritch Pact (hybrid), Warlock's Curse (hybrid)
Hybrid Talent Options: Prime Shot, Shadow Walk, Warlock Pact Boon

Class Features

Hybrid warlocks have the following class features.

Eldritch Pact (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the warlock class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 130), except that you don't gain the at-will attack power or the Pact Boon granted by it. This means you meet prerequisites that require the pact you choose, and you can use the benefits tailored for it in certain powers.

Warlock's Curse (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the warlock class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 131), except that you can deal the extra damage only when you hit a cursed enemy with a warlock power or a warlock paragon path power.

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Prime Shot: This class feature functions exactly as the warlock class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 131).

Shadow Walk: This class feature functions exactly as the warlock class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 131).

Warlock Pact Boon: You gain the Pact Boon associated with your Eldritch Pact.

To select this option, you must have selected the at-will attack power associated with your pact. If you later retrain that power, you lose the benefit of this option.

Suggested Combinations

A sorcerer/warlock can be a potent striker, with Charisma as the highest ability score.

Combining the warlock with the wizard creates a synergistic power list, and the wizard's key ability, Intelligence, is a good secondary ability for the warlock.

A combination of warlock and bard works quite well, thanks to the ability score overlap of the two classes and the diversity of their power selection.

Hybrid Warlord

You have combined your talent for command with other skills, rather than focusing entirely on leadership. How and where did you come to learn the intricacies of command? Did an early stint in the military or tutelage at the feet of a tribal leader inspire

you to grasp the reins of authority? Or have you only recently donned the mantle of leadership?

As a hybrid warlord, you bring talents of combat leadership and healing to a group, although you give up the Commanding Presence class feature.

COMMENTARY
AC: We had to limit the frequency of use for Commanding Presence, because otherwise a hybrid cleric/warlord who chose that would effectively have 100% of the efficacy of a regular warlord plus access to cleric powers.

Class Traits

Role: Leader
Power Source: Martial
Key Abilities: Strength, Intelligence, Charisma

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth, leather, hide, chainmail; light shield
Weapon Proficiencies: Simple melee, military melee, simple ranged
Bonus to Defense: +1 Fortitude or Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 6
Hit Points per Level Gained: 2.5
Healing Surges per Day: 3.5
Class Skills: Athletics (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Endurance (Con), Heal (Wis), History (Int), Intimidate (Cha)
Class Features: ***Inspiring word*** (hybrid), Warlord Leadership
Hybrid Talent Options: Commanding Presence (hybrid), Warlord Armor Proficiency

Class Features

Hybrid warlords have the following class features.

Inspiring Word (Hybrid): You gain the warlord power *inspiring word* (*Player's Handbook*, page 145). The power functions as normal, except that you can use it only once per encounter.

Warlord Leadership: You choose one of the following class features.

Battlefront Leader: This class feature functions exactly as the warlord class feature (*Martial Power 2*, page 83).

Canny Leader: This class feature functions exactly as the warlord class feature (*Martial Power 2*, page 82).

Combat Leader: This class feature functions exactly as the warlord class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 144).

Hybrid Talent Options

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select one of the following options.

Commanding Presence (Hybrid): This class feature functions as the warlord class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 144), except that you can grant the benefit of your Commanding Presence option only once per encounter.

Warlord Armor Proficiency: You gain proficiency with leather armor, hide armor, chainmail, and light shields.

Suggested Combinations

The paladin/warlord and fighter/warlord combinations provide durability and melee control as well as healing.

For a barbarian/warlord, what's more inspiring than charging into battle with a savage war cry? Make Charisma your second-highest ability score and pick powers from the two classes that take advantage of it.

A consummate leader, the cleric/warlord should focus on powers that use Strength and Charisma.

Hybrid Wizard

The path of wizardry demands focus and study, yet you have mastered several elements of arcane magic while still having time for other learning.

Did you give up a promising academic life to pursue a less sheltered existence? Did your mentor abandon you before sharing the final secrets of arcane lore? Or have you only recently begun the long task of mastering the arcane power that permeates the cosmos?

As a hybrid wizard, you have much of a wizard's versatility in power selection, but you give up the flexibility provided by the Ritual Casting and Spellbook class features, as well as the Arcane Implement Mastery class feature.

COMMENTARY
AC: The wizard was probably the toughest class to hybridize. It proved extremely difficult to isolate which class features were iconic to the wizard but yet not so good that a hybrid wizard became simply better than a normal wizard. Some versions offered Arcane Implement Mastery, some offered rituals, some had a version of the spellbook, but none of these quite passed the test. Ultimately, we settled on the version you see here. It seems like the hybrid wizard gives up a lot, but these sacrifices represented the fairest solution to the conundrum.

Class Traits

Role: Controller
Power Source: Arcane
Key Abilities: Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity

Armor Proficiencies: Cloth
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, quarterstaff
Implements: Orbs, staffs, wands
Bonus to Defense: +1 Will

Hit Points at 1st Level: 5
Hit Points per Level Gained: 2
Healing Surges per Day: 3

Class Skills: Arcana (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Dungeoneering (Wis), History (Int), Insight (Wis), Nature (Wis), Religion (Int)

Class Features: Cantrips
Hybrid Talent Options: Arcane Implement Mastery

Class Feature

Hybrid wizards have the following class feature.

Cantrips: This class feature functions exactly as the wizard class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 158).

Hybrid Talent Option

If you take the Hybrid Talent feat, you can select the following option.

Arcane Implement Mastery: This class feature functions exactly as the wizard class feature (*Player's Handbook*, page 157).

Suggested Combinations

As a hybrid wizard, you're not particularly durable, so you must choose your second hybrid class, as well as your powers, with care.

The swordmage shares the same key ability, but that class's predilection for melee combat is at odds with the typical wizard's preference for staying out of the fray. To keep up in melee, select a good mix of close attack powers and some feats that improve your survivability. Alternatively, focus your swordmage power selection on ranged powers and area powers and enter melee only as a last resort.

A cleric/wizard who has good Intelligence and Wisdom scores can safely and effectively remain in the back ranks while supporting allies with battlefield control and healing.

Adding the avenger class to your hybrid wizard allows you to surprise your enemies with the occasional deadly melee attack. Taking Armor of Faith through the Hybrid Talent feat gives you the boost to AC you need to stay close enough to deliver such an attack.

About the Author
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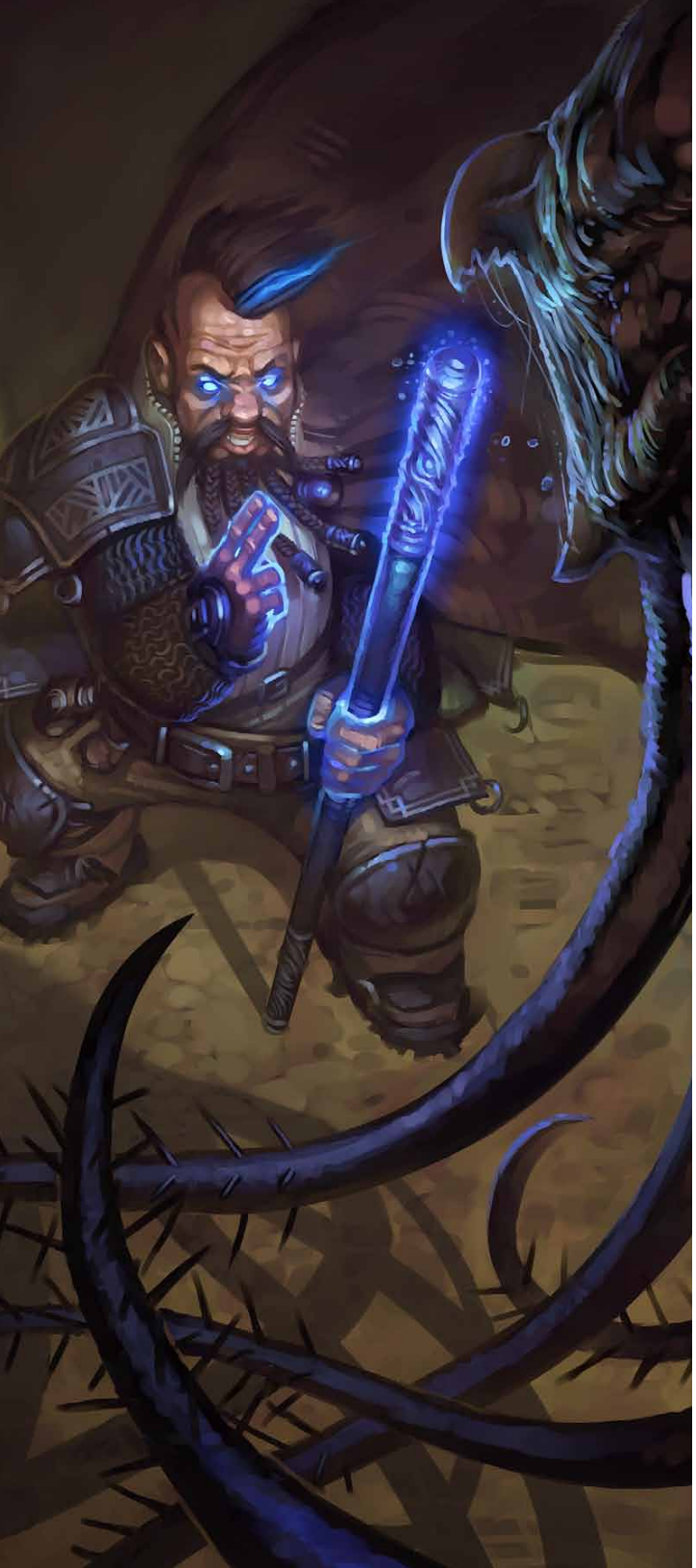

Invoker Essentials:
Secrets of Holy Might

By Robert J. Schwalb
Illustrations by Eric Belisle

"Religion is not the answer. It is a mortal invention, a fabrication born from the existential crisis we all face. Your reliance on so-called sacred writings, dry ceremonies performed out of habit, and even the bit of metal you use to advertise your devotion are all nothing more than the trappings of doubt. I do not deny some priests walk with their patrons. I am the first to acknowledge the power avengers, clerics, paladins, and their ilk can wield. But their knowledge of the gods is filtered through their expectations and their definitions, and for this reason these divine servants will never know their god as I know my own. You see, I reject the religion's trinkets. I reject your prayers, your holy books, and your myths. I have no need for such distractions, for I am awakened to my god. Within me is my patron's essence and through it I know my master's mind."

~ Thanlok, dwarf invoker of Moradin

The invoker stands alone among the divine champions described in the *Player's Handbook*® sourcebooks. Where clerics, avengers, and paladins embrace the gods through holy rites, indoctrination, and investiture, the invoker transcends mortal limitations and forges a compact with the god directly. Other divine characters depend on tradition, faith, and trappings to know their patrons and receive divine energy through their devotion and the symbols and icons they wield. Invokers, however, have no need for these methods, for they have a personal connection to their gods, using methods long forgotten from the Dawn War of antiquity. Invokers give their souls to the gods and receive enlightenment, powers, and unequaled grace in exchange. The connection allows invokers to channel their gods' power and bring to bear the full divine authority against their enemies. As a result, invokers are not often welcomed in religious communities, feared by some, ostracized by others, but none can deny the strength flowing through them and the destruction of which all are capable of creating.

The Basics

"My god has looked into my soul and found me worthy. Can you say the same?"

The invoker is a divine champion, chosen by a god to advance his or her aims in the natural world. Armed with ancient prayers from a time when creation's dew still lay wet upon the world, clad in shining mail and gripping a shining staff or cruel rod, the invoker strides into battle with the confidence that faith and power will bring victory where others would find defeat.

Channel Divinity

Divine classes have access to the Channel Divinity class feature. Invokers gain two powers. First is *rebuke undead*—the invoker's answer to the cleric's *turn undead* power, and second is the a power determined by your Divine Covenant choice (see below).

Armor of Wrath (Covenant of Wrath): *Armor of wrath* punishes enemies that attack you, letting you deal retributive radiant damage and push the enemy away. Since this is a burst attack, you don't have to see the target. Wrathful invoker-themed powers are area burst attacks, so distance between you and your opponents is important. *Armor of wrath*, then, is your insurance. A high Constitution score helps you make the most of this power. The Armor of Burning Wrath (*Divine Power*™) and Scouring Wrath (*Player's Handbook 2*) support this power.

Maledictor's Doom (Covenant of Maledictions): The cursing invoker's tool, *maledictor's doom* is an aggressive power designed to work in conjunction with your other invoker attack powers. This enemy-only close blast 5 attack penalizes your foes' attack rolls and saving throws and allows you to push them when you hit with a fear attack. *Maledictor's doom* is handy by itself, but following up with *whispers of defeat* or *malediction of rigidity* or with a power that bestows ongoing damage or a condition a saving throw can end shows its real strength.

Preserver's Rebuke (Covenant of Preservation): *Preserver's rebuke* boosts your accuracy against enemies that hit your allies. When you use this power, be sure to follow up with an encounter attack power to maximize its effects. While the power can help you deliver the most with a daily attack, you rarely benefit when you miss with an encounter power. However, you'll only find this power useful if you have at least a +1 bonus from Intelligence, and then you should really have a +2 or higher bonus to see a significant improvement. Advantageous Rebuke (*Dragon* #378) and Deadly Rebuke (*Divine Power*) boost this power.

Rebuke Undead (All Invokers): A straightforward power, *rebuke undead* is generally only useful against undead creatures, so it's not always useful. Luckily, your Divine Covenant power is always useful so there's no loss here. When faced with undead enemies, *rebuke undead* should be one of the first powers you use. To expand your options, think about Demonbane, Devilbane (both from *Divine Power*) and Dragonbane (*Dragon* #378).

Other Powers: As of this writing, there are over one hundred channel divinity feats and with so many options, it can be tough to figure out which, if any, will be helpful. Rather than run through an exhaustive analysis of each feat, keep the following things in mind.

Do you need this power? You can only use a Channel Divinity power once per combat. If the power is not as good as your Divine Covenant power, you probably don't need it.

Does the power reinforce your role or secondary role? Dabbling in other areas is fine so long as it doesn't come at the expense of doing your job. During the early levels when feats are more precious, you'll be better served by taking feats to augment your class features, accuracy, and damage. Later, when you have feats to spare, a power that expands your options can't hurt.

Does the power address a weakness? If you or your group has a weakness (missing a role, or a character that needs help fulfilling a role's responsibilities), a Channel Divinity power could address the concern.

Divine Covenants and Builds

Divine Covenant provides a Channel Divinity power (described above) and a covenant manifestation. Together, these features help set you apart from other invokers and offer tactical insight into how you can best operate on the battlefield. But more than the mechanical advantages, your Divine Covenant can also informs your character's personality, goals, motivation, and relationship to his or her deity.

Covenant of Malediction

"I burn the infidel with my scathing castigations. I annihilate the demon, the undead, and the devil, burning them with the righteous sound of my god's voice."

The gods entrust you with potent words of creation, seeing in you a worthy vessel to learn and use them. The Covenant of Malediction hampers your enemies through stiff penalties and nasty conditions.

Malediction Invoker

Your powers deal more damage and have greater effects, but at the expense of the having to deal with their side effects. Focus on self-defense and accuracy. Anything that gives you bonuses to your attack rolls, boosts your hit points, defenses, and helps you shed negative conditions will help you survive the prayers you intone. These powers favor close bursts and blasts, so you need to be close to your enemies to deal with them. Luckily, your covenant manifestation lets you push a target back after you use your encounter and daily attacks. Baleful Malediction (*Divine Power*) and Invoker Defense (*Player's Handbook 2*) are strong feat choices for malediction invokers.

Covenant of Preservation

"I am the shield against iniquity. I stand fast against the darkness, shining the path to victory through my resolution and dedication."

The gods charge you with safeguarding their interests in the world and give you the power to ensure nothing they prize comes to harm.

Preserving Invoker

The preserving invoker build is less about aggressive attacks and more about keeping allies alive long enough to defeat the enemies. A preserving invoker leans toward the leader role and many powers associated with the build move enemies around, hinder their attacks, or set up enemies so your allies can finish them off. Preserving invokers often favor ranged attacks over aggressive area bursts, helping them pinpoint key enemies and mitigate their effects on the battle's outcome. Focus more on developing your leadership abilities, whether this means picking up the Initiate of the Faith feat (*Player's Handbook,* page 208) or investing in Channel Divinity feats from gods and domains that focus on healing, saving throws, and strong leader benefits.

Covenant of Wrath

"I am the fire of hate, the brand of justice. I am the sword of heaven and woe to all who stand against me."

You embody divine fury and through you the gods smite their foes. Reckless and dangerous, wrathful invokers are all flash and bang.

Wrathful Invoker

The wrathful invoker brings raw, destructive power to an adventuring group. Concerned less with battlefield control, these invokers use divine magic like a hammer. Certainly, their powers may have some control aspects, but the focus is on smiting the enemy. You are best at handling groups of enemies as your covenant manifestation grows your encounter and daily attack damage based on the number of foes targeted by your attack. For these reasons, you should look for area attack and close attack powers for your encounter and daily prayers, and reserve targeted ranged attacks for your at-will powers. Defense is important, but offense is even more important. Accuracy and damage should guide your first choices and feats like Distant Advantage, Coordinated Explosion, and Implement Expertise are key tools tools. Resonating Covenant (*Player's Handbook 2*) is a good feat for maintaining your momentum in combat.

Ritual Casting

You get Hand of Fate and a 1st-level ritual of your choice. The Create Holy Water ritual from *Divine Power* is your best choice. If you do become trained in Arcana, Comprehend Languages and Tenser's Floating Disk are good choices too. Brew Potion is a handy ritual available to any ritual caster, but, like Hand of Fate, you won't get much or any use out of it until you reach a higher level. While you can have more immediate benefits from the Alchemist feat, you deny yourself the free use of Hand of Fate.

Don't forget that you can use Hand of Fate for free once per day. The ritual reveals insights about your options, helping you determine which choice will provide the most rewarding outcome. Reserve this ritual for times when you have several courses of action, but also realize the ritual will always point you to the most rewarding outcome, regardless of the risks taking it may pose.

Implements

When you channel the power into your prayer, you use your rod or staff to direct the magic where you wish the prayer to take effect. Rods are often more aggressive implements, imbued with powers designed to augment your attacks and escalate the destruction you wreak. Malediction and wrathful invokers favor rods.

Most, but not all, staffs have defensive powers. They might protect you from harm by granting you immediate reaction attack powers to throw back attackers or they could shield allies from harm. Preserving invokers favor staffs.

Starting Power Selection

Controller powers tend to fall into two broad groups: control and area attack. Your build choice will favor one of the two options, with malediction invokers favoring control, wrathful invokers favoring area and close attacks, and preserving invokers fall somewhere between the two. In addition, each build also favors certain types of powers. Malediction invokers prefer close burst and blast attacks, wrathful invokers like area attacks, while preserving invokers are more cautious and use ranged attacks.

At-Will Prayers

When choosing your at-will prayers, don't be afraid to mix up your options. While certain builds favor one type of attack, your at-will powers are your go-to options when all else fails. Area attack powers lose their value when your allies are at risk and especially when you only have an enemy or two left to fight. Ranged powers shore up these problems but you control less of the battlefield. Finally, try to mix up the defenses your prayers attack. All Fortitude attacks reduce your effectiveness against most brutes and soldiers, while too much focus on Reflex means you'll have a tough time against lurkers and skirmishers.

Area Options

Grasping shards (*Player's Handbook 2*) is an easy power to overlook since it deals low damage and the slow condition isn't always useful, but it makes an effective "third" power for dealing with second and third waves. Also, by 21st level, *grasping shards* is only 2 points behind *vanguard's lightning* (*Player's Handbook 2*) and its condition is less situational. Although recommended for the wrathful invoker and malediction invoker, it may be a better option for the preserving invoker. If you're still not convinced, *vanguard's lightning* can serve as it helps you shut down enemies' opportunity attacks. However, since the extra damage is determined by Intelligence, *vanguard's lightning* is best reserved for preserving invokers.

Close Options

Astral wind (*Player's Handbook Heroes: Series 1*) is a serviceable choice defensive-minded invokers, as it combines modest damage with a push and a promise for more damage if a target closes the distance. Like *visions of blood* (*Divine Power*) below, this power strikes all creatures, so its utility diminishes later in the combat. While *astral wind* has its advantages, human invokers benefit most by taking this power for their extra at-will power.

Malediction invokers benefit the most from *visions of blood* as most of their encounter and daily powers are close bursts and blasts. It has the fear keyword, so it can be paired with *maledictor's doom* for great effect. *Visions of blood* provides a defensive component in that it bestows a penalty to attack rolls, but it's ally-blind, in that it hits all creatures, and so it suffers in later rounds.

Ranged Options

Avenging light (*Player's Handbook 2*) deals more damage than any ranged at-will power, making it a strong choice for wrathful invokers and malediction invokers, especially since Constitution determines the extra damage and because the power can be used as a ranged basic attack. Preserving invokers with a Constitution score of 13 or lower, however, are better off with *sun strike*.

For invokers preferring the direct approach and wanting more damage than *hand of radiance* (*Divine Power*) can deal, *divine bolts* (*Player's Handbook 2*) may be the workhorse you need. Solid range, multi-target capability, combined with standard damage makes this power a simple if unpredictable staple. It's a good choose for any invoker that lacks a strong secondary ability score.

Hand of radiance may be a low-damage power, but its can target enemies in all different directions. *Vanguard's lightning* might deal more damage, but it's restricted to one group and can also catch your allies. *Hand of radiance* lets you surgically pick off minions or low-hit point enemies at leisure. This power is a good choice for preserving invokers or for human invokers of any build.

Mantle of the Infidel (*Divine Power*) offers long range and supports defenders. If you don't have a defender in your group, *divine bolts* is a better choice. The long range and teamwork nature of this power makes it a good alternative for preserving invokers with one or two defenders in the party.

Finally, there's *sun strike* (*Player's Handbook 2*). On par with *avenging light* in terms of range, *sun strike* falls behind in damage output. However, it makes up for this by sliding the target and its ability to be used as a ranged basic attack. Preserving invokers and malediction invokers with low Constitution scores should take this power.

Encounter Prayers

Your encounter prayers are where you contribute best to the team and so these powers best reflect your role. When picking your encounter power, think about how you want to engage the battefield, keeping your build, covenant manifestation, and Channel Divinity powers in mind. High damage may not be the best choice (unless you're a wrathful invoker), just as a complex control effect may prove too situational for your needs. Finally, think about your at-will choices and how your encounter power might replace one of those prayers during the combat.

Area Options

Blades of astral fire (*Player's Handbook 2*) deals less damage than does *lightning's revelation* but it targets enemies and boosts your allies' defenses. If you

choose this power, you don't have to use it right away and you may be better served in waiting until the encounter's middle before throwing this prayer into the mix. Any invoker can use this power to great effect, though preserving invokers with at least a 14 or higher Intelligence score derive the biggest benefit.

Lightning's revelation (*Divine Power*) is a high-damage area attack power, dealing modest damage and shredding your targets' defenses. Since the power targets all creatures, don't sit on it. Use it first before the enemies can close. Wrathful invokers with at least a 14 Constitution score should consider this power, especially if they lack a strong area attack at-will prayer.

Close Options

Astral terror (*Player's Handbook 2*) is the perfect answer for when you're surrounded by enemies. Use this power later in the encounter to break apart enemy clumps or to break a siege. Invokers with low secondary abilities, specifically malediction invokers, benefit from choosing this power.

Forceful denunciation (*Divine Power*) is another good defensive power, being essentially an improved version of *astral wind*. It strikes enemies only, deals more damage, and you can push the target 1 square (more if you're a preserving invoker with an 14+ Intelligence). If you're an eladrin, think hard about this power, since you can use it and then *fey step* away.

Summons of Justice (*Divine Power*) is a quintessential malediction invoker power. A high-damage power, *summons of justice* pulls enemies in close, letting you draw in controllers, artillery, and leaders to face your allies' attacks. However, using this power makes you dazed, so you only want to use this power after you've done everything else you want to do in the round and with protection from a sturdy defender.

If *summons of justice* makes you nervous, give *whispers of defeat* (*Divine Power*) a look. Malediction invokers with a Wisdom score of 14 or higher should choose *whispers of defeat* over *summons of justice*. When you use this power, be sure to lead with *malediction's doom* first to stack the penalties from both powers stack.

Ranged Options

Spear of the Inquisitor (*Player's Handbook 2*) is an uncomplicated power. This is an especially good power for preserving invokers, as they can let an ally shift into position to set up a flank. *Thunder of judgment* (*Player's Handbook 2*), however, deals more damage and dazes your opponent with a hit. In addition, you can split the attack to target up to three creatures. If you have the Covenant of Wrath, you not only deal more damage, but you also push the target away from your. Even with the covenant of wrath, this power is a strong option for any invoker.

Daily Prayers

Your daily prayers represent the greatest power your god offers and when you use them, you push against the limits of what is possible. Invokers have nine powers to choose from, but unlike other invoker powers, these are all close burst or blast or ranged.

Close Options

Angelic echelon (*Divine Power*) is useful for dealing with nearby foes. It strikes only enemies and punishes targets for making attacks. However, the miss effect deals very little damage. If you have few close burst or blast attack spells, you might find *angelic echelons* a good defensive power to have.

Binding invocation of chains (*Player's Handbook 2*) may seem a poor choice since it slows enemies, but don't overlook its size—you cover the whole battlefield. If you choose this prayer, it should be the first power you use when faced with several opponents. It's a strong controller-themed prayer, and it combines nicely with other controllers.

Execration (*Divine Power*) is clearly themed for malediction invokers. It deals lower damage, but guarantees ongoing damage in exchange for taking ongoing damage yourself. Since this power is a burst,

you don't have to see the enemy to use it. Plus, you can increase the damage by focusing the attack against a single foe. Be sure to lead with *maledictor's doom* to impose the penalty to saving throws, but only use this power when you have the hit points to take the damage.

Invocation of ice and dire (*Divine Power*) is a risky choice since it hits allies. You should use this power early in an encounter when you can catch enemies grouped together.

Finally, there's *silent malediction* (*Divine Power*). Although confined to a smaller blast, *silent malediction* stuns your opponents. Combined with *maledictor's doom*, you can rob actions from your opponents in exchange for being dazed. This is an all creature power, so you should use this power early. If you're a malediction invoker and you have a good initiative modifier, this may be the power for you.

Ranged Options

Crown of retaliation (*Divine Power*) is another subtle power. It deals negligible damage to start, but it has the potential to deliver devastating damage in a matter of rounds. Each time an ally within 5 squares of the target takes damage, it take 5 radiant damage. So even if your defender is hit four times by minions, your target takes 20 radiant damage. This is a power you should use once the combatants settle into their positions, but while there are still several foes left to fight. You should target high hit point opponents, but be careful about hitting elites and solos since they are more likely to overcome the effect. A maledictor invoker has an edge since *maledictor's doom* reduces the chance that the enemy can shrug off the prayer's effects.

Wrathful invokers can't go wrong with *purging flame* (*Player's Handbook 2*) as it delivers good damage and guaranteed ongoing damage. *Storm call* (*Divine Power*) is similar to *purging flame*, but it deals less damage. The trade off is two damage types and the chance to daze.

Summon angel of fire (*Player's Handbook 2*) grants you a flying servant with a standard action close burst attack. Wrathful invokers favor this prayer, but any invoker can benefit from taking it.

Future Powers

After your initial power selection, you gain new powers as you reach new levels. Your power selection might support the tactics you mastered at the start or they might suggest new options and combinations. Furthermore, if you chose a power that didn't quite work for you at 1st level, you can always use retraining to try something else.

Abilities

As an A-shaped class, you depend on one ability for your attack powers. Your secondary ability reinforces your build and secondary role. Other abilities support your skill choices and can open up new options for feats.

Wisdom: Your most important ability, Wisdom determines accuracy and potency for your attacks. If you choose Insight for training, you will be better than almost anyone else at seeing through deceptions.

Constitution: All invokers benefit from Constitution, but wrathful and malediction invokers need it most. Powers with build riders often rely on Constitution to determine the added benefits. Malediction invokers often harm themselves when they use prayers, so the extra hit points are a boon. Without a high Constitution, make sure you have at least one close attack power for defense, but emphasize area burst and ranged attacks for the rest of your powers.

Intelligence: Only the preserving invoker needs a high Intelligence since many powers that support the build use Intelligence to determine the benefits from having the Covenant of Preservation. But Intelligence is also an important ability for Arcana, History, and Religion, all of which are important skills for invokers to have.

Dexterity: Your third most important ability score is Dexterity. Although you can wear chainmail, Dexterity helps your initiative checks and many invoker powers are most effective when used early in the encounter, especially for the wrathful invoker.

Charisma: Invokers need Charisma only for interaction skills such as Diplomacy and Intimidate. If you choose a race that grants a bonus to Charisma, making sure you have a 12 in this ability helps you contribute in negotiations, interrogations, and information gathering.

Ability Score Spreads

The following ability score spreads are meant to serve as a starting point for building invokers. Other factors such as race, character concept, multiclassing, and personal preference may necessitate changing your scores around. For example, if you choose a race that does not grant a +2 bonus to Wisdom, you might replace a 16 with an 18, and reduce your other abilities to compensate.

MALEDICTION INVOKER SPREAD

SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY
8	STR Strength	12	DEX Dexterity	16	WIS Wisdom
15	CON Constitution	12	INT Intelligence	10	CHA Charisma

PRESERVING INVOKER SPREAD

SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY
8	STR Strength	10	DEX Dexterity	16	WIS Wisdom
13	CON Constitution	16	INT Intelligence	11	CHA Charisma

WRATHFUL INVOKER SPREAD

SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY	SCORE	ABILITY
8	STR Strength	12	DEX Dexterity	17	WIS Wisdom
15	CON Constitution	11	INT Intelligence	10	CHA Charisma

RACE

While invokers can be any race, racial traits can factor strongly in your character's performance. A race with a bonus to Wisdom tends to have an easier time as an invoker than say a race with a bonus to Dexterity and Charisma, but this does not make such a combination a bad choice, but merely a challenging one. When thinking about a race, consider the ability bonuses first, looking to races that boost Wisdom, and then Intelligence or Constitution. Next look at the race's defensive capabilities in powers and racial traits. As a controller, you're generally softer than defenders and anything that keeps you safe from your enemies is a good asset. Feat options are also good ways to compensate for abilities that fall a bit short too. Finally, does the combination seem fun? Sure, a drow invoker is tough to pull off, but can you see an avenging drow descending into the Underdark to punish her corrupted kin?

RACE AND BUILD

Race	Recommended Build
Advantaged Combinations	
Deva	Preserving invoker
Dwarf	Wrathful invoker
Wilden	Malediction invoker
Good Combinations	
Elf	Wrathful invoker
Githzerai	Wrathful invoker
Human	Any
Kalashtar	Preserving invoker
Longtooth shifter	Malediction invoker
Razorclaw shifter	Wrathful invoker
Average Combinations	
Changeling	Preserving invoker
Eladrin	Preserving invoker
Genasi	Preserving invoker
Gnome	Preserving invoker
Goliath	Wrathful invoker
Half-Elf	Wrathful invoker
Minotaur	Wrathful invoker
Revenant	Wrathful invoker
Shadar-kai	Preserving invoker
Tiefling	Malediction invoker
Warforged	Malediction invoker
Challenging Combinations	
Dragonborn	Wrathful invoker
Drow	Preserving invoker
Half-Orc	Wrathful invoker
Halfling	Preserving invoker

DOMAINS

Domains, introduced in *Divine Power,* modify at-will prayers and offer new Channel Divinity powers through feats associated with the domain. Each god offers two or more domains, and each domain has two feats, one to alter the at-will powers associated with the domain and the other to provide a Channel Divinity power. To help navigate the domains, the following table provides the powers and the domains that augment them.

ASSOCIATED INVOKER POWER FOR DOMAINS

Power	Domains
Avenging Light	Fate, hope, light, strength, trickery, vengeance
Divine Bolts	Arcana, change, sea, skill, tyranny
Grasping Shards	Creation, destruction, knowledge, poison, undeath
Hand of Radiance	Moon, winter
Mantle of the Infidel	Civilization, justice, torment
Sun Strike	Love, strife, sun, wilderness
Vanguard's Lightning	Freedom, luck, protection, storm
Visions of Blood	Darkness, death, earth, madness, war

Builds by Deity

You might want to choose your build based on what best fits your deity's spheres of influence. The following list shows the builds that best match each god.

Deity	Typical Build
Avandra	Preserving Invoker
Bahamut	Wrathful Invoker
Corellon	Wrathful Invoker
Erathis	Preserving Invoker
Ioun	Malediction Invoker
Kord	Wrathful Invoker
Melora	Preserving Invoker
Moradin	Preserving Invoker
Pelor	Preserving Invoker
The Raven Queen	Malediction Invoker
Sehanine	Malediction Invoker

Invoker Prayers

The following prayers provide new options for invokers of any build.

Level 1 Encounter Prayers

Angelic Harrier — Invoker Attack 1

A fiery angel swoops down to catch your enemy with its spear and hurl it to the ground.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d10 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target slides 3 squares. Make a secondary attack.
Secondary Target: Same as primary target
Secondary Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: The target falls prone.

Scourge of Heaven — Invoker Attack 1

Astral blades dart and weave through your foes, visiting onto them heaven's fury.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Wisdom + 2 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + Wisdom modifier damage.
Covenant of Malediction (Fear): The target also takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.
Covenant of Preservation: Each ally in the burst gains a +2 power bonus to defenses until the end of your next turn.
Covenant of Wrath: The target takes extra damage equal to your Constitution modifier.

Level 1 Daily Prayers

Angelic Protector — Invoker Attack 1

A grim angel in heavy armor comes forth from the ether to lend its aid in your struggle.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement, Summoning
Minor Action **Ranged** 5
Effect: You summon a Medium angelic protector in an unoccupied square within range. The angel has speed 6 and has a +2 bonus to AC. You can give the angel the following special commands.
Standard Action: Melee 1; Wisdom vs. Reflex; 2d12 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target is marked until the end of your next turn.
Opportunity Attack: Melee 1; targets one creature; Wisdom vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

Brilliant Beacon — Invoker Attack 1

You raise your implement to call forth a column of light from the heavens. Those sworn to darkness cannot abide its purifying rays.

Daily ✦ Divine, Fear, Implement, Radiant, Zone
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: The target takes ongoing 10 radiant damage (save ends).
Miss: 5 radiant damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone of brilliant light that lasts until the end of your next turn. As part of a move action, you can move the zone up to 6 squares. Enemies in the zone take a –2 penalty to attack rolls, defenses, and saving throws. The zone ends at the end of your turn if you are within the zone.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

Level 2 Utility Prayers

Altar of Confinement — Invoker Utility 2

You compel enemies who would flee your fury to seek comfort in their allies.

Daily ✦ Divine, Radiant, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You enter the altar of confinement stance. Until the stance ends, whenever you use a divine encounter or daily power, one enemy you can see that is not adjacent to any creature takes radiant damage equal to the higher of your Constitution or Intelligence modifiers.

Heaven's Bountiful Reward — Invoker Utility 2

The gods smile on your success, gifting you with renewed commitment and strength.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Free Action **Close** burst 1
Trigger: You drop a non-minion enemy to 0 hit points with an invoker attack power
Target: You and each ally in burst
Effect: The target gains temporary hit points equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Level 3 Encounter Prayers

Fires of Judgment — Invoker Attack 3

After weighing your enemies' corruption you deem them worthy only of hellfire and death.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Covenant of Wrath: You gain a +1 bonus to the attack roll if any bloodied allies are in the burst.
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier fire damage. If you have any bloodied allies in the burst, the attack deals 2d12 + Wisdom modifier fire damage instead.
Covenant of Malediction (Fear): The target also slides 1 square.
Covenant of Preservation: Allies in the burst gain a +2 bonus to saving throws until the start of your next turn.

Radiant Cordon — Invoker Attack 3

Blazing light hedges in your foes, promising agony should they seek escape.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant, Zone
Standard Action **Close** blast 5
Target: Each creature in blast
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.
Effect: The blast creates a radiant cordon zone that lasts until the start of your next turn. Any enemy that exits the zone on its turn becomes blinded until the zone ends.

Level 5 Daily Prayers

Summon Celestial Lion — Invoker Attack 5

A roar echoes across the battlefield when a golden lion leaps from a shining curtain of gold.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement, Summoning
Minor Action **Ranged** 5
Effect: You summon a Medium celestial lion in an unoccupied square within range. The lion has speed 6 and gains a +2 bonus to speed when charging. It has a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex. You can give the lion the following special commands.
Standard Action: The celestial lion charges and makes the following attack: Wisdom + 1 vs. Fortitude; 1d12 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target is knocked prone.
Opportunity Attack: Melee 1; targets one creature; Wisdom + 1 vs. Fortitude; 1d12 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the celestial lion shifts 1 square.

Dawn's Blazing Fingers — Invoker Attack 5

A shining crown flares on your brow and from its gleaming surface come forth five burning rays.

Daily ✦ Divine, Fire, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One, two, three, four, or five creatures
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d4 + Wisdom modifier fire and radiant damage.
Effect: Each creature hit by the attack also takes ongoing fire and radiant damage depending on the number of targets hit:
1 target: ongoing 15 fire and radiant damage (save ends).
2 targets: ongoing 10 fire and radiant damage (save ends).
3, 4, or 5 targets: ongoing 5 fire and radiant damage (save ends).

Level 6 Utility Prayers

Altar of Defense — Invoker Utility 6

You are a shielding presence and those who fight at your side wear the armor of the gods.

Daily ✦ Divine, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You enter the altar of defense stance. Until the stance ends, whenever you use an invoker encounter or daily power, one ally within 10 squares that you can see gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of your next turn.

Patron's Blessing — Invoker Utility 6

You reopen the channel to your god to facilitate divine energy's flow.

Daily ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You regain the use of an expended Channel Divinity power. You may use Channel Divinity a second time during this encounter.

Level 7 Encounter Prayers

Curse of the Divine Plague — Invoker Attack 7

You breathe out a divine curse, afflicting your enemies with a terrifying ailment that spreads like wildfire.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Close** blast 5
Target: Each enemy in blast
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: The target is dazed, and afflicted by the divine plague until the end of your next turn.
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, each creature that starts its turn adjacent to a creature afflicted by divine plague is dazed and afflicted by the divine plague until the start of its next turn.

Omen of Damnation — Invoker Attack 7

You call forth the dread omen of damnation and those who look upon the terrifying image feel their souls burn in righteous fury.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One enemy
Effect: The target can choose to become blinded until the end of your next turn. If it does, then it not subject to the following attack.
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 3d6 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and the target moves its speed away from you.

Level 9 Daily Prayers

Brand the Heretic — Invoker Attack 9

A fiery rune appears on your enemy's brow, revealing to all the depths of your patron's displeasure. Wherever the enemy goes, it will find only scorn and derision.

Daily ✦ Divine, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Melee** 1 or **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 2d12 + Wisdom modifier fire damage
Effect: The target is affected by the heretic's brand (save ends). While the target is affected by the heretic's brand, it is dazed, takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls, and all creatures treat the target as an enemy for the purpose of attack powers.

Cast the First Stone — Invoker Attack 9

A single stone splits into many shards that pelt your enemies and drive them to their knees.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d10 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target is knocked prone.
Effect: Each enemy adjacent to the target takes 5 damage and slides 1 square to a square not adjacent to the target.

Level 10 Utility Prayers

Angelic Messenger — Invoker Utility 10

A star descends from the heavens and as its light fades a cherubic angel is revealed to aid in your cause.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing, Summoning
Minor Action **Ranged** 10
Effect: You summon an angelic messenger in an unoccupied square within range. The angelic messenger has speed 6, and fly 8 (hover). You can give the angelic messenger the following special commands.
Standard Action: Melee 1; targets one ally; the ally regains 1d6 hit points.
Move Action: The angelic messenger and one ally adjacent to it fly 8 squares. The ally must land at the end of this movement, or he or she falls.

Cloud of Locusts — Invoker Utility 10

Bloated locusts descend on the area around you, blotting out the sun with their hideous numbers.

Daily ✦ Divine, Zone
Standard Action **Close** burst 3
Effect: The burst creates a zone of locusts that lasts until the end of your next turn. The zone moves with you, remaining centered on your space. Squares inside the zone are heavily obscured and whenever a creature is bloodied by an attack while inside the zone, that creature becomes dazed until the end of its next turn.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer whose more recent work can be found in the *Player's Handbook 3*, *Martial Power™ 2*, and *Draconomicon™ 2: Metallic Dragons*.

Devotees of the Gibbous Moon

Secrets of the Beast Form

By Robert J. Schwalb

Illustrations by Daren Bader and Eric Belisle

Few primal classes can match what a druid can achieve by using primal magic. The spirits answer the druid's command and cause enemies to erupt in flesh-melting flames, create thorny vines to entrap foes, or shepherd primal servants to fight on their behalf. But although these powers are impressive, wizards too can call forth servants. Invokers can wield divine magic to annihilate their foes. Psions can dissolve their enemies' mind with a thought. So, how then does the druid stand apart?

Druids possess the unique ability to adopt a bestial form. Through power granted by the primal spirits, druids shed the bodies to which they were born and become something else. In humanoid form, a druid wields primal magic to blast enemies and reshape the battlefield, but when the druid changes, it dispenses with subtlety and engages his or her foes directly with claws and fangs.

As shown first in the *Player's Handbook 2* and later in *Primal Power,* druids rely on *wild shape* to change tactics and, to some extent, their role. While these sourcebooks provide a strong foundation for this class feature, druids find even greater and more varied techniques with the options presented over the following pages.

Approaches

A druid's relationship with the *wild shape* power can range from utility to affectation. As a utility, *wild shape* broadens your combat options by diminishing your presence as a controller and reinforcing your secondary role as striker or defender. Blasting foes at a distance with *sunbeam* and then charging to *pounce* at a blinded enemy demonstrates both your versatility and adaptability. Maintaining a good balance between beast form powers and more traditional controller powers helps make you one of the most unpredictable opponents on the battlefield.

Of course, *wild shape* has other advantages. Through feat and power choices, you can heighten your senses, acquire new movement modes, and, perhaps, even disguise your appearance. While *wild shape* offers mechanical advantages not available to other classes, it is also a compelling roleplaying hook for developing your character's personality. This class feature is, in a way, a door to a different world. When you use *wild shape,* you move through it to see your surroundings in a different light, freeing you from preconceptions based on your culture and heritage. And from this understanding comes a wealth of knowledge and appreciation for the trust the primal spirits place within you. These experiences can color you perceptions about civilization. They might strengthen your resolve to defend nature against despoilers and exploitation. Or you could find yourself becoming more and more like the beast whose form you wear until you become uncouth, unrestrained, and savage. Then again, you might fight against the wild nature that haunts you, preserving

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your intellect and reserve when you use *wild shape* so that you ensure the form serves you and not the other way around.

To help you figure out how you want to use this ability, consider the following questions.

✦ How do you regard your *wild shape* ability?

✦ What animalistic traits stay with you in humanoid form?

✦ In which form are you most comfortable?

Appearance

When a druid uses *wild shape*, his or her size remains unchanged and the form usually reflects a natural or fey beast (quadrupeds are most common, but nothing should stop you from assuming a simian form). The *Player's Handbook 2* also permits transformation into the facsimile of the Primal Beast, a shadowy and nebulous form that embodies nature's most violent and destructive side.

With few boundaries on the forms a druid might take, your imagination is the limit on what you look like when you use *wild shape*. Many druids favor forms that match their personalities and sometimes the form's particulars arise from unconscious decisions. A cunning trickster might become a fox, while a sly type could become a puma. Race can also play a part in animal forms. Devas tend to adopt hound forms, while dwarves tend to favor bears. Minotaurs might become bulls, while gnomes can become badgers.

Another deciding element is patron spirit. Primal characters don't worship primal spirits, but they do commune with them, offer them sacrifices, and honor them. (Similarities exist in how primal characters regard the spirits, but the relationship is often one of equals rather than service.) Characters with a special connection to a particular primal spirit might take on a form to reflect a singular devotion. For example, devotees of the Great Bear assume bear forms, while those of the Deep Winds might become spiders or lizards.

To help you determine details of your preferred form for roleplaying, consider the following questions.

✦ What form do you most often take?

✦ Are there any distinguishing characteristics?

✦ Do you have unusual mannerisms while in beast form?

Window to the Spirit World

Wild shape is perhaps the easiest way to perceive the spirit world. Remember, as *Primal Power* points out, the spirit world is not so much a place, but rather it is a means to understanding how spirits inhabit the natural world. You can't open a portal and step into the spirit world since the spirit world is the natural world. In some ways, it is a truer expression of the natural world than how mortals ordinarily perceive it. Primal spirits differ from creatures in that where creatures are substance given form, primal spirits are form without substance. For this reason, mundane eyes can't perceive these entities unless they are evoked from the "spirit world."

When you use *wild shape*, you partially enter this spirit world, which allows you to glimpse the natural world's true state. Shadows crawl, rocks stir, faces surface in trees: It is as if the whole of creation were animate, but only in your periphery. You still have no special means of interacting with these spirits outside the evocations you have learned, but your uncommon perspective can sometime grant new insights into problems you face. For example, a helpful spirit might point a safe route into a chasm, if, of course, you notice the spirit.

Using Spirits

When a character interacts with a primal spirit to gain guidance or assistance, the result of such assistance falls within the bounds of the skill check. In the example of the helpful spirit, the character simply makes the Perception check and notices the path into the ravine. The spirit's aid is not measured by a mechanical process (though exceptions such as the shaman's *speak with spirits* power exist), but it is a story element you or your DM can use to explain your uncommon success.

The spirit world can disorient those who see it, since half realized terrors and astonishing beauty fill it. Druids learn to overcome the natural fears the spirit world engenders, but for some the terrifying reality is one from which they can never escape.

While your beast form helps you see into the spirit world, many primal characters come to their talents by undertaking spirit journeys without the aid of evocations or primal techniques, such as *wild shape*, offer. For these characters, the spirit journey reveals their destiny in fragments, teaching them the fundamental methods for apprehending primal power. Some druids, then, come to favor a particular beast form from their spirit journey, adopting the form they first wore when they cast their consciousness into the beyond.

Think about the following questions when you're trying to figure out how your character interacts with the spirit world.

✦ What was your first encounter with the spirit world?

✦ Were you as you are, or did you wear a different form?
✦ Did you make any discoveries about yourself or future? If so, what were they?

Perils

Tales abound of those who dabble in primal magic without the training or discipline to control it, and in almost every case they end in tragedy. These tales are lessons to novices, and they advise restrain and caution when wielding primal magic. But as with most tales, each has a core of truth. The most frightening legends are of those who adopt the forms of beasts and lose themselves to the transformation. Druids can shift between forms without trouble, but most druids experience an unsettling comfort when wearing their animal forms—as if they were meant to be in that form rather than the body to which they were born. The longer the time spent in the form, the more the beast comes to exert its influence over the individual until, some speculate, the druid forgets who he or she was and thus becomes trapped ever after in the beast form.

Primal tribes sometimes use these same legends to explain the appearance of strange and magical creatures in the world, and they suggest that centaurs, fauns, and other fey creatures might descend from druids who forgot. Naturally, fey creatures and learned folk know these stories have little grounding in truth, but rare is the druid who doesn't feel a chill during his or her first transformation brought on by the unsettling feelings of becoming something else.

Some questions you might want to answer include the following:
✦ How do you feel when you are in beast form?

✦ Does your mind assume bestial characteristics or do you cling to your personality?
✦ Are you reluctant to resume your humanoid shape or do you abandon the beast form the first chance you get?

Frequency

Mastering *wild shape* is a fundamental necessity for a novitiate druid to become fully vested in primal magic. While all druids can shift from one form to the other without trouble, not all druids use this power with the same frequency. For all its uses, entering the beast form prevents a druid from accessing the more spectacular evocations and it frequently restricts the druid to fighting one enemy at a time. Druids who embrace their controller role use *wild shape* as a last resort, only falling into the beast form when directly threatened and then only until the druid can make good his or her escape. Other druids revel in their beast form and prefer to stay in it for as long as they can, only emerging into humanoid form when circumstances dictate they must.

In terms of frequency, you can ask yourself these questions to further solidify your character's concept:
✦ Which form do you wear most often?
✦ Is your beast form central to your character's identity?
✦ Or is it a trick, to be used sparingly?

New Feats

Any character that meets the prerequisites can take these feats.

Ape's Reach

Prerequisite: Druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Athletics checks.

While you are in beast form and you are bloodied, you gain +1 reach with melee basic attacks.

Beast Form Eyes

Prerequisite: Druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Perception checks.

While you are in beast form, you gain low-light vision.

Cheetah's Speed

Prerequisite: Druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: While you are in beast form and you are bloodied, you gain a +4 feat bonus to speed when you charge or run.

Constrictor's Grasp

Prerequisite: Druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to skill checks made when using the escape action.

Whenever a creature you are grabbing while you are in beast form fails an escape attempt to end the grab, it takes damage equal to the higher of your Constitution modifier or Dexterity modifier.

Monkey's Rush

Prerequisite: Druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Athletics checks.

When you bull rush while in beast form, you can slide the target rather than push the target.

Shifting Wind

Prerequisite: Druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: When you use your second wind while in beast form, you can also shift 2 squares.

Slithering Form

Prerequisite: Druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: You do not provoke opportunity attacks when crawling while in beast form.

You gain a +2 feat bonus to Acrobatics checks.

Stampede

Prerequisites: Druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: After making a charge attack while in beast form, you can move 2 squares as a free action.

Turtle's Shell

Prerequisites: Druid, *wild shape* power

Benefit: While you are in beast form, any time you take the total defense action or use your second wind, you gain resist 5 to all damage until the end of your next turn.

New Druid Evocations

Level 1 Daily Evocations

Form of the Primeval Ape Druid Attack 1

You assume the form of the primeval ape, a more powerful and ancient version of the modern ape.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You assume the form of the primeval ape until the end of the encounter, or until you use the *wild shape* power again. While you are in this form and are bloodied, you gain a +5 bonus to Athletics checks and always jump as though you had a running start. Additionally, when you jump, the distance you jump is not limited by your speed. Once before the end of the encounter, you can make the following attack.

Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: One Large or smaller creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier damage, and you push the target 3 squares and knock it prone.

Form of the Primeval Bear Druid Attack 1

You assume the form of the primeval bear, a monstrous creature of great strength and savagery.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You assume the form of the primeval bear until the end of the encounter, or until you use the *wild shape* power again. While you are in this form, you gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls with beast form powers. Once before the end of the encounter, you can make the following attack.

Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: One Large or smaller creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target is grabbed.

Form of the Primeval Boar Druid Attack 1

You assume the form of the primeval boar, a tusked creature who hunts in the darkest of primeval forests.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You gain temporary hit points equal to your healing surge value and assume the form of the primeval boar until the end of the encounter, or until you use the *wild shape* power again. While you are in this form you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with charge attacks. Once before the end of the encounter, you can make the following attack.

Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier damage, and you slide the target 1 square. The target is marked by you until the end of your next turn.
Special: You can use this attack in place of a melee basic attack at the end of a charge.

Level 5 Daily Evocations

Form of the Primeval Lizard — Druid Attack 5

You assume the form of the primeval lizard, a great creature with razor-sharp fangs from the dawn of time.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You assume the form of the primeval lizard until the end of the encounter, or until you use the *wild shape* power again. While you are in this form you gain a +2 bonus to Athletics checks, and a +2 bonus to opportunity attack rolls. Once before the end of the encounter, you can make the following attack.

Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn. While it is slowed, if the target moves or shifts into a square that is not adjacent to you on its turn, it takes damage equal to your Constitution modifier.

Form of the Primeval Spider — Druid Attack 5

You assume the form of the primeval spider, the great poisonous beast from which all other spiders are descended.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You assume the form of the primeval spider until the end of the encounter, or until you use the *wild shape* power again. While you are in this form, you gain a +1 bonus to saving throws and gain a climb speed equal to your normal speed. Once before the end of the encounter, you can make the following attack.

Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Form of the Primeval Wolf — Druid Attack 5

You assume the form of the primeval wolf, the feral hunter that stalked your ancestors.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You assume the form of the primeval wolf until the end of the encounter, or until you use the *wild shape* power again. While you are in this form, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with beast form powers against targets that are granting you combat advantage. Once before the end of the encounter, you can make the following attack.

Free Action **Melee** touch
Trigger: You hit an enemy with a beast form melee attack
Target: The target of your triggering attack
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target falls prone.

Level 9 Daily Evocations

Form of the Primeval Cat — Druid Attack 9

You assume the form of the primeval cat, a sleek hunter and savage predator that stalks the night.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You assume the form of the primeval cat until the end of the encounter, or until you use the *wild shape* power again. While you are in this form you gain a +2 bonus to Stealth checks and a +1 bonus to speed. Once before the end of the encounter, you can make the following attack.

Standard Action **Melee** touch
Effect: You shift half your speed. At any point during this movement, make the following attack once.
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier damage.

Form of the Primeval Raptor — Druid Attack 9

You assume the form of the primeval raptor, a massive bird of prey feared and revered by many cultures.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You assume the form of the primeval raptor until the end of the encounter, or until you use the *wild shape* power again. While you are in this form, you gain a fly speed equal to your speed, but you must land at the end of each turn. Once before the end of the encounter, you can make the following attack.

Standard Action **Melee** touch
Effect: Before making the following attack, you fly half your speed. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Wisdom modifier damage, and you shift 1 square.

Form of the Primeval Serpent — Druid Attack 9

You assume the form of the primeval serpent, the great slithering creature that haunts the nightmares of your enemies.

Daily ✦ Beast Form, Implement, Poison, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You assume the form of the primeval serpent until the end of the encounter, or until you use the *wild shape* power again. While you are in this form, you gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls on opportunity attacks. You also gain a swim speed equal to your normal speed. Once before the end of the encounter, you can make the following attack.

Standard Action **Melee** touch
Target: One Large or smaller creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d10 + Wisdom modifier damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage and the target is slowed (save ends both).

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer whose more recent work can be found in the *Player's Handbook® 3*, *Martial Power™ 2*, and *Draconomicon™ 2: Metallic Dragons*. Robert lives in Tennessee with his wife Stacee and his cat-led army of giant frogs.

The Art of Binding: Warlock Vestiges

By Russel Jones and Jeramy Pappas
Illustration by Sarah Stone

In some societies, people view warlocks as bad omens. Parents scare children with stories of evil warlocks that lurk in the night, making deals with vile forces and corrupting anything good with which they come in contact. The more learned know that an average warlock is no more likely to be evil than any other spellcaster; a warlock's pact is another way to access arcane power. However, those better schooled in the ways of the arcane can become uneasy at the thought of a vestige pact warlock, who not only communes with beings of great power, but allows them far greater access to the world than any other magic practitioner.

The powers presented here, as well as many from *Arcane Power*, give a vestige pact warlock the ability to help fill the secondary role of leader or controller. Having this ability is especially useful for parties that lack either of these roles or have an abundance of strikers, and it can help in situations where doubling up gives the group an edge.

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Level 1 Daily Spell

Vestige of Thaxter — Warlock Attack 1

Thaxter, the great goblin hero, instills within you and your allies the cunning of a legendary goblin strike force.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Effect: You can shift a number of squares equal to your Intelligence modifier before or after this attack.
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d6 + Constitution modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage
Vestige Pact: You gain access to the vestige of Thaxter.
Thaxter Pact Boon: One ally within 5 squares of you gains a +2 power bonus to his or her next attack roll before the end of your next turn.
Eyes of the Vestige Augment: Until the end of your next turn, whenever your *eyes of the vestige* target misses you or an ally with an attack, the character it misses can shift 1 square as a free action.

Level 5 Daily Spell

Vestige of Baatar — Warlock Attack 5

You call upon Baatar the Tiderider, a powerful water archon, to drown your foe in elemental water.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + Constitution modifier damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target falls unconscious (save ends).
Miss: Half damage and target is slowed (save ends).
Vestige Pact: You gain access to the vestige of Baatar.
Baatar Pact Boon: One creature affected by your Warlock's Curse cannot charge or shift until the end of your next turn.
Eyes of the Vestige Augment: Until the end of your next turn, you can slide your *eyes of the vestige* target 1 square as a free action whenever an ally hits it.

Level 9 Daily Spell

Vestige of the Onyx Queen — Warlock Attack 9

The Onyx Queen, a legendary black-scaled medusa who turned an army to stone before her defeat, grants you a measure of her power so that you can petrify your foes.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Poison
Standard Action **Close** blast 3
Target: Each creature in blast
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + Constitution modifier poison damage, and you petrify the target (save ends).
Aftereffect: The target is immobilized (save ends).
Miss: Half damage and you slow the target (save ends).
Vestige Pact: You gain access to the vestige of the Onyx Queen.
Onyx Queen Pact Boon: One creature within 5 squares of you takes a -2 penalty to Fortitude until the end of your next turn.
Eyes of the Vestige Augment: Your *eyes of the vestige* power deals 1d10 extra poison damage.

Level 15 Daily Spell

Vestige of the Unknown Arcanist — Warlock Attack 15

You release upon another the might of an unknown wizard who unleashed a spell that removed him, his name, and his enemies from the flow of time.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + Constitution modifier damage, and the target vanishes (save ends). While vanished, the target takes 5 damage at the start of its turn, occupies no space, can take no actions, has neither line of sight nor line of effect to anything, and nothing has line of sight or line of effect to it. When the target saves, it reappears in its original space or the nearest unoccupied space.
Miss: Half damage and you slow the target (save ends).
Vestige Pact: You gain access to the vestige of the Unknown Arcanist.
Unknown Arcanist Pact Boon: You teleport one creature affected by your Warlock's Curse 3 squares as a free action.
Eyes of the Vestige Augment: Your *eyes of the vestige* target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Level 19 Daily Spell

Vestige of Kronata — Warlock Attack 19

With the fury of an ancient volcano god, you bring a rain of fire down on your enemy.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Constitution vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Constitution modifier fire damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).
Vestige Pact: You gain access to the vestige of Kronata.
Kronata Pact Boon: As a free action, you deal fire damage equal to your Constitution modifier to one or two enemies affected by your Warlock's Curse, and you push each enemy 1 square.
Eyes of the Vestige Augment: If your *eyes of the vestige* target moves closer to you before the end of your next turn, it takes 1d10 fire damage and falls prone at the end of its movement.

Level 25 Daily Spell

Vestige of Vykolad — Warlock Attack 25

One of the first vampires, Lord Vykolad faded away after countless lifetimes. You invoke his power to pull the life force from your enemies.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Healing, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 4d8 + Constitution modifier damage, and the target is weakened (save ends). You regain hit points as if you had spent a healing surge.
Miss: Half damage and you regain hit points equal to one-half your level + your Intelligence modifier.
Vestige Pact: You gain access to the vestige of Vykolad.
Vykolad Pact Boon: You become insubstantial until the end of your next turn.
Eyes of the Vestige Augment: Your *eyes of the vestige* target takes a penalty to damage rolls equal to twice your Intelligence modifier until the end of your next turn.

Level 29 Daily Spell

Vestige of the Earthen Maker
Warlock Attack 29

You invoke the forgotten maker of the terrifying tarrasque, borrowing some of the rage and strength that went into that creation.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Effect: Damage and ongoing damage from this attack ignore all resistances and immunities.
Hit: 3d10 + Constitution modifier damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage and the target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Vestige Pact: You gain access to the vestige of the Earthen Maker.
Earthen Maker Pact Boon: You gain resist 10 to all damage until the end of your next turn. Each time you benefit from this boon again before the end of your next turn, increase the resistance by 5.
Eyes of the Vestige Augment: You push your *eyes of the vestige* target a number of squares equal to your Intelligence modifier and knock the target prone, and the target cannot fly until the end of your next turn.

Paragon Paths

Two paragon paths provide you with further options for your warlock character: the umbral cabalist and the astral ascendant.

Umbral Cabalist

"I have seen into the darkest abyss and made its power my own. I fear nothing of this world."

Prerequisite: Warlock, vestige pact

Centuries ago, a powerful covenant of warlocks known as the Umbral Cabal summoned a demon lord to do its bidding. The demon, known as Kulnoghrim the Terrible, committed such horrific deeds of carnage and madness that it became too much for the warlocks to bear. The group bound the fiend by using a forbidden ritual, destroying themselves in the process and leaving Kulnoghrim to languish into obscurity.

By studying their methods, you gain the ability to ward yourself from attack and bind your foes as this cabal did the great demon lord. With each secret you uncover, you grow closer to accomplishing what they could not: gaining the ability to bind Kulnoghrim as a vestige and unleashing his demonic fury to burn your enemies and drive them mad.

Umbral Cabalist Path Features

Restricting Action (11th level): When you spend an action point, you restrain one enemy affected by your Warlock's Curse until the end of your next turn.

Cabalist's Warding (11th level): When you become bloodied, you gain a bonus to your choice of Fortitude, Reflex, or Will equal to your Constitution modifier until you are no longer bloodied.

Demonic Resilience (16th level): The first time you take typed damage in each encounter, you gain resist 10 to that damage type until the end of the encounter.

Umbral Cabalist Spells

Command of the Abyss
Umbral Cabalist Attack 11

Calling forth lore that bound the powerful demon Kulnoghrim, you rend your foe's mind and leave it less able to ward off outside influences.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Will
Hit: 1d6 + Constitution psychic damage, and you stun the target until the end of your next turn.

Clarifying Rebuke **Umbral Cabalist Utility 12**

You rally your will, calling upon the secrets of the cabal's Grand Jailer to stay in control.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Immediate Interrupt **Personal**
Trigger: An effect dominates you, or you are subject to a charm or fear effect that a save can end
Effect: The triggering effect doesn't affect you. You can place your Warlock's Curse on the creature that caused the triggering effect, if any.

Vestige of Kulnoghrim
Umbral Cabalist Attack 20

You don the awesome fury of Kulnoghrim the Terrible, bringing his fiery wrath and madness down on your enemies.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Constitution vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d10 fire damage and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).
Vestige Pact: You gain access to the vestige of Kulnoghrim.
Kulnoghrim Pact Boon: One creature within 5 squares or affected by your Warlock's Curse makes a basic attack against a target of your choice as a free action.
Eyes of the Vestige Augment: If your *eyes of the vestige* target doesn't end its next turn farther from you than it began the turn, it takes fire damage equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Astral Ascendant

"Your meager abilities will not help you against the greatest mind ever to take the field of battle."

Prerequisite: Warlock, vestige pact

While pouring through ancient tomes during your studies, you came across mention of a skilled young general. His ability to drive soldiers to greatness and forge decisive victories against the deadliest foes was the subject of many ballads and stories. This young commander excelled so much at his chosen tasks that an ancient god brought the general to the Astral Sea, tasking him to command and train the angels of Mount Celestia.

As an Astral Ascendant, you have become the embodiment of the greatest general and tactician that ever lived. Your commands send your allies screaming into battle, encircled with the pure radiance of the Astral Sea, which grants empowerment, protection, and healing. Your presence on the battlefield is enough to turn the tide of war in your favor.

Astral Ascendant Path Features

Preparing Action (11th level): When you spend an action point, you and each ally within 5 squares of you gain temporary hit points equal to your Intelligence modifier and can shift 1 square as a free action.

Radiant Curse (11th level): Your Warlock's Curse deals radiant damage. You can deal your Warlock's Curse's extra damage to a creature affected by your Warlock's Curse when an ally hits that creature, but still only once per round.

Celestial Resistance (16th level): You gain resist necrotic equal to one-half your level. Allies you can see have resist 5 necrotic while within 5 squares of you.

Astral Ascendant Spells

Overwhelming Radiance
Astral Ascendant Attack 11

You blast your foe with searing radiant energy, leaving it temporarily open to your allies' attacks.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d10 + Constitution modifier radiant damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Angelic Aura **Astral Ascendant Utility 12**

Radiant energy surrounds you, lifting you into the air and mending your allies' wounds.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Healing
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, you gain a fly speed of 6 and can hover. Any bloodied ally that starts its turn within 5 squares of you regains hit points equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Vestige of the Ascendant Commander
Astral Ascendant Attack 20

You strike down your enemies with the wrath of the Ascendant Commander, leaving them reeling as your radiance burns into them.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Healing, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Attack: Constitution vs. Reflex
Target: Each enemy in burst
Hit: 3d8 + Constitution modifier radiant damage, and you daze the target (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: If you hit at least one target, each ally in the burst can spend a healing surge. If you miss all targets, one ally in the burst can spend a healing surge.
Vestige Pact: You gain access to the vestige of the Ascendant Commander.
Ascendant Commander Pact Boon: You gain a +2 power bonus to AC until the end of your next turn. If you are bloodied, increase the bonus to +4.
Eyes of the Vestige Augment: Until the end of your next turn, allies' attacks against the target deal 5 extra radiant damage.

About the Authors

Russell Jones and **Jeramy Pappas** currently work in TV news, but would prefer to sit around and think about dwarves and goblins all day. They live in Arkansas, where they prowl the night looking for sparkly vampires to stake or a decent gaming store, whichever comes first. This is their first article for *Dragon* magazine, and they hope you like it.

Hoard to Get: Dragon Lair Items

By Jennifer Clarke Wilkes
Illustration by Eric BelisleIllustration
Cartography by Jared Blando

The *Adventurer's Vault*™ 2 supplement introduces a new subset of wondrous items: lair items. Adventurers can add these magic items to their base of operations (or "lair"). They provide comforts when the party returns home after a difficult adventure, and they offer a home-field advantage against enemies who would dare assault them in their sanctum. Unlike most magic items, lair items aren't portable; they must be left behind when a hero goes exploring.

Dragons, being lair-focused creatures, also make use of such items to improve the security of their hoards, to make their lairs more comfortable, and to enhance the pleasure of collecting specific sorts of treasure. Indeed, some dragons go a step further and transform potions of their hoards into lair enhancements.

As DM, you should be careful when adding lair items to a dragon's base. Many of these items enhance dragons' native abilities and are not useful to heroes who overcome the hoard's guardian, so they are less valuable as treasure. However, the materials that constitute such items are still inherently valuable and can be sold for one-half the listed market price.

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General Items

The lairs of dragons might have one or two of the following general items, but, as mentioned above, take care when designing the hoard.

Exchequer's Ledger

Dragons obsessively track the value of their hoards. The loss of even a single copper coin can infuriate a dragon, not so much for its value but for the breach of security such information reveals. With a truly massive hoard, magical methods of accounting make checking it quick and easy.

Exchequer's Ledger Level 10

A simple wooden desk supports a book filled with ever-changing mystical entries.

Wondrous Item 5,000 gp
Property: After remaining stationary for at least 24 hours, the ledger displays a detailed entry of each object within 10 squares and the best estimate of its monetary values.
Power (At-Will): Standard Action. You consult the ledger and learn the summed monetary value of all objects accounted for by the ledger's property. You instantly know if the total has changed in any way since the last time you consulted the ledger, but not when or by what means.

Invigorating Coins

Dragons love their treasure. They dig their claws into it, roll around in it, and especially sleep on it. Some dragons infuse the very act of enjoying the hoard with a magical benefit.

Invigorating Coins Level 15

Enchanted heaps of gold and silver coins form a deep, comfortable nest to reinvigorate the most ancient dragon.

Wondrous Item 25,000 gp
Property: After you take an extended rest on this bed of coins, you gain 2d8 temporary hit points.
Power (Daily): No Action. Trigger: You use your breath weapon while occupying the bed's space. Effect: You automatically recharge your breath weapon.

Magnificent Tapestry

A dragon that maintains an alternate identity, or has established a secondary base, might want to keep tabs on that location while in its lair.

Magnificent Tapestry Level 16

The scenes depicted in this richly embroidered wall hanging seem uncannily realistic.

Wondrous Item 45,000 gp
Property: This tapestry is blank until first used. You can use the View Location ritual by meditating on the desired location in front of the tapestry for 10 minutes. Instead of making an Arcana check, the scrying sensor lasts for 1 round and the DC to detect the sensor is 24. You see the results of the ritual in the tapestry, and when the effect ends, the tapestry retains the last image it displayed until it is next used.

Security Items

The sanctity of its hoard is the first priority of any dragon. Security items range from the simple to fabulous, but all help keep a hoard safe or alert its possessor to intrusion. The lair might be mobile!

Burrow-Ward Blade

Draconic parasites (*Draconomicon*™*: Chromatic Dragons*, page 22) can serve limited security roles, but dragons dislike sharing their hoards with the nasty little creatures. The pest guard makes a dragon aware of their presence.

Burrow-Ward Blade Level 8

This enchanted ornamental blade alerts you when creatures try to enter your hoard from beneath the ground.

Wondrous Item 3,400 gp
Property: You can plant this blade, usually a dagger or a sword, point-first in the ground. After it has remained there for 24 hours, when any creature burrows to a square within 20 squares of the blade (this distance ignores line of effect), the blade emanates a magical intonation only you can hear that indicates the creature's location, including depth. You must be within 40 squares of the blade to hear its warning. If the blade is moved, it ceases to function until it is again planted in the ground and stationary for 24 hours.

Globe of Projection

Although dragons love to spend time in their hoards, sometimes other matters require their absence. Nothing discourages a would-be hoard thief more than having to deal with the owner in person—or believing that the owner is present.

Globe of Projection Level 18

The image of a roaring dragon is visible in the depths of this blood-red crystal orb.

Wondrous Item 85,000 gp
Property: You can spend 1 hour attuning this large globe to yourself. You must reattune the globe if you move it. Thereafter, you can perform the Hallucinatory Creature ritual by spending 1 minute activating the globe. This functions as the ritual, but the illusion can be of any size, is always an image of you, and cannot travel more than 20 squares from the globe. Instead of making an Arcana check, the number of programmable actions is always 2 minor actions, 2 move actions, and 1 standard action, and the Insight check to pierce the illusion is 30. You can create only one illusory creature at a time with this item.

Loadstone Vault

Dragons create *loadstone vaults* to frustrate burglars that somehow reach their hoards, forcing these would-be thieves to take less than they normally would and slowing them down.

Loadstone Vault Level 15

This treasure chamber makes a would-be thief work much harder for that haul.

Wondrous Item 25,000 gp

Property: You can spend 24 hours attuning the vault to yourself. Any item left in the vault for at least 24 hours weighs five times normal for creatures not attuned to the vault until it has been outside the vault for 24 hours. In addition, unattuned creatures cannot fly within the vault.

Wandering Trove

In the time before time, before the Dawn War, a fearsome primordial dubbed the Master of Tides strode the planes. This entity was less patient than its primordial kin; wherever it traveled, it ripped apart whatever structures it discovered, leaving raw entropy in its wake. Even the planes themselves offended its sense of chaos, and it tore rifts between them as it moved. When the war between the gods and primordials began, the Master of Tides was among the first the gods slew, because the gods especially feared its plane-spanning destruction.

After the Master of Tides' death, the gods shattered its body and cast the pieces adrift in the Astral Sea. Astral travelers occasionally encounter chunks of strange, green-black stone—often planar portals open nearby. But some have reported seeing similar odd rocky masses adrift in the fiery rivers and thunder seas of the Primordial Chaos, and deep in a primeval Feywild forest or lifeless Shadowfell cavern.

A wandering trove is a roughly hemispherical, hollow structure mined from this green-black stone. The remnant of the dead primordial is only loosely bound to a given plane and randomly shifts locations. Over time, vegetation and mineral accretions disguise its natural form.

Quest Ideas

Missing in Action: While on campaign in enemy lands, a company of the monarch's soldiers came upon a dome-shaped hill in the middle of a plain. Seeking the advantage of high ground, the troops established a camp on the hilltop. During the night, the hill disappeared, and the monarch has heard nothing of the company's whereabouts since. He or she is offering a reward for news of the troops' fate.

Unwelcome Visit: A massive chunk of green-black rock suddenly materialized over the city of Oldengarde and crushed a large neighborhood. The occurrence was upsetting enough, but now the city is facing attacks from an adamantine dragon that learned of the artifact and wishes to claim the *wandering trove* for itself.

Wandering Trove Level 30

What seems an ordinary hill suddenly vanishes into thin air!

Wondrous Item 3,125,000 gp

Property: The trove's interior is a rough sphere about 10 squares across. It has no doors. If you spend 24 hours attuning yourself to the trove, you can use the Linked Portal ritual to create a portal to the interior of the trove. If the trove is on another plane, you must instead use Planar Portal. Once attuned, you are always aware of the trove's location, even if it is on a different plane. As long as you remain attuned to the trove, no other creature can attune to the trove. The trove shifts location every 2d6 days to an unoccupied space elsewhere on the same plane or another plane. If you wish to randomly determine where the trove goes or where the trove is at any given time, roll 2d6 and consult the following table.

Result	Destination Plane
2	Feywild
3	Shadowfell
4-6	Astral Sea
7	Same plane as last attuned creature
8-10	Elemental Chaos
11-12	The World

Meditation Rooms

Forming a subset of lair items presented in *Adventurer's Vault 2* are training facilities, which allow a character to retrain powers as if he or she had gained a level. Similarly, a dragon can create a dedicated area of a lair where it can meditate on its nature and adapt its inborn abilities to changing circumstances.

Aasterinian's Hall Level 11

Every surface of this brilliant room is decorated with images of blue dragons in attitudes of play and delight.

Wondrous Item 9,000 gp

Property: After you spend 24 hours meditating in the hall, the next time you spend an action point to make an attack before your next extended rest, you score critical hits with that attack on a roll of 19 or 20.

Sanctum of Astilabor Level 18

Depictions of an ancient red dragon, surrounded by heaps of treasure, cover the walls of this chamber.

Wondrous Item 85,000 gp

Property: After you spend 1 hour meditating in the sanctum, choose one damage type to which you have resistance. Replace that resistance with equal resistance to another damage type for the next 24 hours.

Hoard-Built Items

An ingenious way for a dragon to both enjoy and protect its treasure is to use the hoard in the construction of its lair, enhanced by magical defenses.

Adamantine Cradle — Level 15

Dull black metal lines this massive nest and shield inhabitants from danger.

Wondrous Item 25,000 gp
Property: This layer of hardened metal suffices to line a partial sphere with a diameter of 4 squares. A creature inside the cradle has superior cover; against attacks from above, it has normal cover.
Power (Encounter): Immediate Interrupt. Trigger: An attack deals damage to you while you are in the cradle. Effect: Reduce the damage you take from the attack by 10.

Gilded Cage — Level 21

This gleaming wall is lined with a fine lattice of gold.

Wondrous Item 225,000 gp
Property: This enchanted gold lines the walls, ceiling, and floor of a chamber up to 10 by 10 by 10 squares. No scrying sensor can cross a surface lined with the material or manifest within a chamber fully shielded by the material, unless the sensor is created by a creature of 21st level or higher.

Mithral Maze — Level 28

A brilliant silvery gateway beckons the unwary.

Wondrous Item 2,125,000 gp
Property: This hallway is lined with enchanted mithral. It is 10 squares long and 6 squares wide and high. You can spend 1 hour to attune yourself and up to eight other creatures to the hallway. The hallway makes an attack as an opportunity action against any creature that enters any square in the hallway: +32 vs. Will; target is immobilized (save ends).
Power (Daily ✦ Teleportation): Standard Action. Make an attack against an immobilized creature in the hallway: Ranged 10; Intelligence or Charisma + 5 vs. Will; the target is trapped in an extradimensional maze (save ends). While trapped, the target's turns start and end as normal, but it can't take actions and it has neither line of sight nor line of effect to anything, and nothing has line of sight or line of effect to it.

Display Items

Creating and adding to a hoard is the task of a dragon's lifetime. Precious things are valuable in their own right, but even more prized are collections of items that reinforce each other in exciting ways.

These display items work only if all the required items are stored in them. Removing any item from the display renders it inactive.

Dazzling Showcase — Level 14

A finely crafted cabinet of polished rare wood with crystal shelves, this fixture displays your collection and awes those who come before you.

Wondrous Item 21,000 gp
Property: While five different art objects each worth at least 1,000 gp are displayed in the cabinet and you are within 5 squares of the cabinet, you gain a +2 item bonus to attack rolls when using fear powers.

Gem-Studded Idol — Level 21

This golden statue of a rampant dragon has sockets where its eyes would be and at the ends of its horns and claws.

Wondrous Item 225,000 gp
Property: While five different gemstones each worth at least 10,000 gp are displayed in this idol and you are within 10 squares of the idol, you gain a +5 bonus to Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Insight checks.

Mighty Armory

The gold dragon Vorelvivex ruled his domain in the form of a mighty dragonborn champion, renowned for military prowess and honorable combat. Over his career, he accumulated many fine arms and suits of armor taken from fallen enemies as the spoils of war and displayed them proudly in a hall of his mansion.

He enjoyed the items' power but was annoyed that he could wield or use only one at a time. He also wanted to gain more than simple prestige from his possessions. So he crafted a *mighty armory* to both showcase his conquests and grant him a chosen power from anything it contained. As the dragon's reputation spread, so did news of his wondrous showroom. Other dragons began to commission such items for their own lairs.

Quest Ideas

Stolen Honor: After losing a duel of honor, the tiefling kensei Deleia Flamedance unwillingly surrendered her *duelist's broadsword* to the victor. Smoldering with resentment and convinced that she was defeated by trickery, Deleia is intent on retrieving her lost weapon and seeks others to help. She is unaware that the other combatant was a mercury dragon who has now placed the weapon in his hoard and has it displayed in a *mighty armory*.

Work in Progress: Building a *mighty armory* requires fine materials that are not readily available—some exist only on other planes. A steel dragon wishes to construct such an item and is hiring adventurers to seek out and obtain the necessary components.

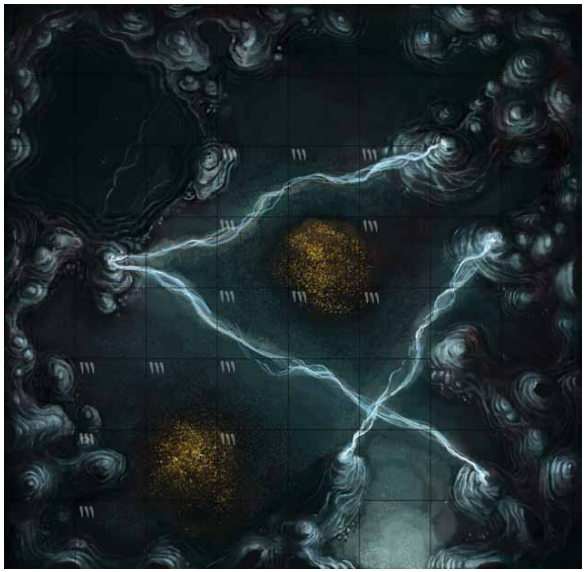
Mighty Armory — Level 28

Gorgeous armor and brilliant weapons are mounted on the walls of this sumptuous chamber.

Wondrous Item 2,125,000 gp
Property: While five different magic weapons or armors each worth at least 100,000 gp are displayed in this armory and you are within 10 squares of the armory, you gain a +2 item bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with melee attacks and a +2 item bonus to AC.

Immurements

The *Adventurer's Vault 2* book also introduced the immurement, an unusual sort of consumable item. Essentially, an immurement is an instant battle map. It encloses a fragment or an echo of a location that can be overlaid on the tactical map and lasts for a short time. Immurements can add spice to an otherwise ordinary encounter, and they make excellent story hooks for adventures. An example of a draconic immurement is presented here.



Immurement of the Jealous Keeper

The ancient bronze dragon Virlymthric had amassed a truly prodigious hoard from centuries of exacting tribute from the buccaneers who roved her coast. When she sensed that the end was approaching, she grew resentful, then furious, at the idea of professional plunderers helping themselves to her property. She determined to transform her seaside cavern into a tomb for not only herself but her riches as well. She destroyed the cavern, collapsing it on itself so that it crumbled into the ocean, then heaped debris and fragments of coral reef atop the site. As she felt death's touch, she shouted out a curse and hurled herself into the depths. A portion of Virlymthric's grasping personality lives on in an enchanted conch shell, which now lies amid her bones on the sea bed.

Quest Ideas

Thwart the Pirates: After her death, Virlymthric's essence infused that part of the coastline with a fog of continual lightning. Pirates try to drive prey into the phenomenon, salvaging wrecks that eventually drift free of the cloud. In the course of such predations, a pirate captain retrieved an *immurement of the jealous keeper* and is studying it to learn clues to the dragon's vanished treasure.

Seek the Hoard: Collectors brave the coastal storms and the pirates to gather perfect seashells for sale, supplementing their meager fishing lifestyle. An eladrin noble traveling incognito discovered a gorgeous conch shell for sale in a ramshackle roadside stand. Recognizing it as something unusual, he acquired the item for a few coins. He now keeps it in his fey demesne, which manifests as a stretch of stormy shoreline encircling his manor. A servant of the Sea Lord Elias covets the wondrous item to earn favor in his court and seeks adventurers to recover it.

Immurement of the Jealous Keeper Level 28

The shell opens into a brackish-smelling cave filled with algae-slimed coins and sparking stalactites.

Other Consumable 85,000 gp

Power (Consumable): Standard Action. You expend this immurement and change the terrain in a close blast 8 until the end of the encounter. Replace the terrain in the blast with the following terrain and effects:

- The heaps of treasure are difficult terrain, and any creature that enters a square of treasure must make a DC 28 Acrobatics check, or the pile slides the creature 1 square and knocks it prone. Like the rest of the immurement's effects, all the treasure vanishes at the end of the encounter.
- The pool is 20 feet deep. Once per encounter, when you start your turn submerged in the pool and bloodied, you regain hit points as if you had spent a healing surge.
- At the start of your turn, lightning arcs between the stalactites as shown on the map. Make an attack against each creature in a square crossed by an arc: +31 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 10 lightning damage. A creature can be attacked in this way only once per turn.
- Each heap of treasure is surrounded by a field of grasping draconic claws, as marked on the map. When any enemy enters a square containing claws, the claws make an opportunity attack: Melee touch; +33 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage, and claws grab the target (DC 28 Athletics or Acrobatics to escape). A creature can attack a square of claws (AC 38, other defenses 36, and 50 hit points). Destroying the square also releases a creature grabbed by it.

Special: Using this item counts as a use of a magic item daily power.

About the Author

Jennifer Clarke Wilkes has been editing just about everything at Wizards of the Coast since 1995, and does a fair bit of writing too. Her recent credits include *Draconomicon: Chromatic Dragons*, *Divine Power™*, and *Wizards Presents: Worlds and Monsters*. When not editing, she is gaming and feeding her inner goblin.

Class Acts: Ranger

By Peter Schaefer
Illustration by Sarah Stone

Rangers make excellent archers, dealing out death from a distance with bow or crossbow. Some have focused their efforts on impeding and trapping their enemies. The high precision these rangers bring to the battlefield allows them to control the flow of battle without stepping foot near an adversary. Your attacks pin foes to the ground or to the wall and wound them so they cannot move. When you ready your bow, your opponents know you intend to strike them down if they move through the area you cover or near the ally you protect. Your allies benefit from your skill with the bow as well, since you use every trick shot in the book to give them an advantage.

Level 1 At-Will Exploits

Warning Shot — Ranger Attack 1

One arrow presages another.

At Will ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Dexterity modifier damage, and choose 1 square in or adjacent to the primary target's space. If a creature moves into that square before the start of your next turn, you can make a secondary attack against the new target as an immediate reaction.
Level 21: 2[W] + Dexterity modifier damage.
Trigger: A creature moves into the designated square.
Secondary Target: The triggering creature
Secondary Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] damage
Level 21: 1[W] + Dexterity modifier damage.

Level 1 Encounter Exploits

Hindering Shot — Ranger Attack 1

An arrow in the leg slows even the hardiest creature.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity modifier damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Level 1 Daily Exploits

Guardian Arrow — Ranger Attack 1

You slam an arrow home and promise more if harm befalls your friend.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Choose an ally adjacent to the target. Until the end of the encounter, if the target attacks that ally, you can make a ranged basic attack with a weapon against the target as an immediate interrupt. You cannot make this attack if the target is marked by that ally.

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Level 2 Utility Exploits

Archer's Stairway — Ranger Utility 2

A stairway of arrows appears where you point your bow.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Minor Action **Personal**
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow or a crossbow.
Effect: Choose 5 contiguous squares of a vertical surface within your weapon range that you can see. The DC for climbing these squares is reduced by twice your Dexterity modifier until the end of the encounter.

Level 3 Encounter Exploits

Covering Volley — Ranger Attack 3

A series of arrows convinces your foes to take a different path.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 20
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow or a crossbow.
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Dexterity modifier damage. A creature that moves into the area before the start of your next turn takes 5 damage.

Level 5 Daily Exploits

Flying Steel — Ranger Attack 5

Your arrows force your opponent to take cover.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, if the target ends its turn without cover from you, you can make a ranged basic attack with a weapon against the target as an immediate reaction. This effect also ends if the target has cover from you at the end of any of your turns.

Level 6 Utility Exploits

Arrow of the Savior — Ranger Utility 6

Your arrow saves a falling friend by pinning him or her to a nearby wall, or presenting a sudden handhold.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Immediate Interrupt **Ranged** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow or a crossbow.
Trigger: A creature in range falls and has a wall or floor within 1 square of it
Target: The triggering creature
Effect: The creature can attempt a saving throw to avoid falling farther. If successful, you can slide the creature 1 square to a horizontal surface, or to a vertical surface that the creature now climbs.

Level 7 Encounter Exploits

Pinning Shot — Ranger Attack 7

Your arrow passes through one enemy to pin another.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Dexterity modifier damage. The target and one enemy adjacent to the target are immobilized until the end of your next turn.

Level 9 Daily Exploits

Thousand Arrow Awareness — Ranger Attack 9

You mark an area in your mind and feed arrows into it every time you have a spare moment.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 20
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow or a crossbow.
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Dexterity modifier damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, when a creature moves into the area, you can make a ranged basic attack with a weapon against that creature as an opportunity action. You can move the affected area up to 3 squares with a move action.

Level 10 Utility Exploits

Defensive Volley — Ranger Utility 10

Your swift arrow weakens an enemy's attack.

Encounter ✦ Martial
Immediate Interrupt **Ranged** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow or a crossbow.
Trigger: An ally is hit by an attack
Target: The triggering ally
Effect: You reduce the damage the target takes by your Dexterity modifier plus half your level.

Level 13 Encounter Exploits

Warding Shot — Ranger Attack 13

The first hit tells the enemy that you intend to make another if it makes a wrong move.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity modifier damage. If the target moves into a space adjacent to an ally before the start of your next turn, you can make a ranged basic attack with a weapon against the target as an immediate reaction.

Level 15 Daily Exploits

Tracking the Target — Ranger Attack 15

Your first target leads you to more.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Dexterity modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, whenever the target moves adjacent to another enemy, you can make a ranged basic attack with a weapon against that enemy as an immediate reaction.

Level 16 Utility Exploits

Back on Target — Ranger Utility 16

Your arrow deflects an ally's attack back onto its true course.

Daily ✦ Martial
Immediate Interrupt **Ranged** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow or a crossbow.
Trigger: An ally misses an enemy within range with a ranged attack.
Target: The triggering ally
Effect: The target can reroll the attack with a +4 power bonus.

Level 17 Encounter Exploits

Entrapping Arrows — Ranger Attack 17

If your enemies move too far, you teach them why they shouldn't.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 20
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow or a crossbow.
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Dexterity modifier damage. If the target leaves the area of the burst before the start of your next turn, you can make a ranged basic attack with a weapon against that enemy as a free action. If that attack hits, the target ends its movement.

Level 19 Daily Exploits

Surprising Arrow Stance — Ranger Attack 19

Your arrows pin down everything you see.

Daily ✦ Martial, Stance, Weapon
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the stance ends, as an immediate reaction when an enemy within 5 squares of you moves, you can make the following attack.
Immediate Reaction **Ranged** weapon
Target: The triggering enemy
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity modifier damage, and the target ends its movement.

Level 23 Encounter Exploits

Dangerous Friends — Ranger Attack 23

You let your foe's friends know that proximity to the foe adds an element of danger.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Dexterity modifier damage. When an enemy moves into a square within 2 squares of the target before the start of your next turn, you can make a ranged basic attack with a weapon against that enemy as a free action.

Level 25 Daily Exploits

Pinning Arrow Rain — Ranger Attack 25

A hail of your arrows traps your foes.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 20
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow or a crossbow.
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC. Make two attack rolls per target.
Hit: 2[W] + Dexterity modifier damage, and the target is immobilized on the first hit (save ends). If both attacks hit, add 2[W] to the damage dealt and the target is restrained instead of immobilized (save ends).

Level 27 Encounter Exploits

Interrupting Volley — Ranger Attack 27

The arrow is only the first in a barrage that hinders your enemy's attacks.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Dexterity modifier damage. If the target makes an attack before the start of your next turn, make the secondary attack as an immediate interrupt against it.
Secondary Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Dexterity modifier damage, and the target takes a penalty equal to your Wisdom modifier on the triggering attack roll.

Level 29 Daily Exploits

Imprisoning Arrows — Ranger Attack 29

When your victim moves, you shut him down.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 5[W] + Dexterity modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, when the target willingly moves, you can make a ranged basic attack with a weapon against the target as an immediate interrupt. If that attack hits, the target ends its movement.

About the Author

Peter Schaefer is a friend to the lesser known creatures of the world. The dust fairies look up to him as an older brother. Tarnish sprites leave their home in the silverware drawer nightly to invite him to play their game of color poetry. Stain imps taunt him, as they do all creatures, but with a shred less spite. The twin fiends Tear and Wear repair the damage their constant playful wrestling does to his clothes, and he is grateful for it. And when Peter works as an RPG developer on such projects as *Adventurer's Vault*™ 2, *Divine Power*™, and many *D&D Insider* articles, his friends offer a chorus of helpful comments that he cheerfully integrates.

Class Acts: Wizard

By Peter Lee
Illustration by Emrah Elmasli

Some wizards are masters of precision and subtlety, but not you. You are an evoker—a master of the creation and manipulation of energy. You control arcane power that topples the greatest armies. You strike down your foes with arcane fire and corrosive acid. While many of your spells focus on a single foe, you are best when fighting groups: You engulf your foes within clouds of corrosive acid, and you strike down those that remain with crackling bolts of lightning. When it is a time of war, you are the wizard the generals call. You are the ultimate force in crowd control.

The following spells expand the options for war wizards, although some spells might appeal to wizards that specialize in control spells.

Level 1 Encounter Spells

Skewering Spikes — Wizard Attack 1

You call forth floating spikes of metal and stone that rapidly streak toward your foes.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged 5**
Target: One, two, or three creatures
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d8 + Intelligence modifier damage, or 2d8 + Intelligence modifier damage if you target only one creature.

Level 1 Daily Spells

Arcane Whirlwind — Wizard Attack 1

Howling winds straight from the Elemental Chaos whip your foes around the battlefield.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Thunder, Zone
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 10 squares
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + Intelligence modifier thunder damage, and you slide the target 1 square.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. As a minor action, you can slide one creature within the zone 2 squares. As a move action, you can move the zone 6 squares.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists, and you can slide one creature within the zone 2 squares.

Level 2 Utility Spells

Mystical Debris — Wizard Utility 2

You create a small amount of stone and rubble that clogs up the area.

At-Will ✦ Arcane
Minor Action **Ranged** 5
Effect: One square in range becomes difficult terrain until the end of the encounter. You can end this effect as a minor action.
Special: You cannot have more squares than your Intelligence modifier under this effect at one time.

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Level 3 Encounter Spells

Cinderfall — Wizard Attack 3

A thousand motes of fire momentarily linger in the air in front of you before streaking toward your foes.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d8 + Intelligence modifier fire damage.
Effect: You deal 5 fire damage to one target in the burst.

Level 5 Daily Spells

Scattering Shock — Wizard Attack 5

Mystical forces draw your foes together as they are struck by a blast of lightning.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Lightning
Standard Action **Area** burst 3 within 10 squares
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: You slide the target 2 squares.
Effect: Make a secondary attack.
Secondary Target: One enemy in burst and each creature adjacent to that enemy
Secondary Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + Intelligence modifier lightning damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Level 6 Utility Spells

Force Ladder — Wizard Utility 6

You create a shimmering ladder to aid your ascent.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Conjuration
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Effect: You conjure a ladder of arcane force in an unoccupied square within range. The ladder can be up to 8 squares tall and lasts until the end of the encounter. The ladder stands firmly, does not need to be attached to anything, and cannot be moved unless you permit it. Climbing the ladder requires a DC 10 Athletics check.

Level 7 Encounter Spells

Corrosive Mist — Wizard Attack 7

A mist of suspended acid droplets consumes your chosen foes.

Encounter ✦ Acid, Arcane, Implement, Zone
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 20 squares
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + Intelligence modifier acid damage, or 3d8 + Intelligence modifier acid damage if there is only one target.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Each creature that enters the zone or starts its turn in the zone takes acid damage equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Level 9 Daily Spells

Firescythe — Wizard Attack 9

Your allies have the split second warning necessary to duck beneath the enormous, flaming scythe summoned by your magic.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 2 within 10 squares
Effect: Each ally in the area can fall prone as a free action.
Target: Each nonprone creature in burst
Attack: Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d8 + Intelligence modifier fire damage.
Miss: Half damage.

About the Author

Peter Lee works as a game designer for Wizards of the Coast, where he splits his time between RPG design and leading the design for *D&D Miniatures*.

Class Acts: the Bard

By Arthur Wright
Illustration by Sarah Stone and William O'Connor

Bards rely on their musical talents to inspire allies and harass foes. Not only do they use words and sounds augment their powers, but they also blow horns to stun and daze their enemies, strum lutes to aid in healing their allies, and beat drums to signal war. The spells, feats, and options in this article add to the bard's arsenal of deadly arcane power.

Level 1 At-Will Spell

Staggering Note — Bard Attack 1

The sharp sound you create causes your opponent to recoil clumsily.

At-Will ✦ Arcane, Implement, Thunder
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: Charisma modifier thunder damage, and you push the target 2 squares. As a free action, an ally of your choice can make a melee basic attack against the target before, after, or during this forced movement.

Level 1 Encounter Spell

Disorienting Ditty — Bard Attack 1

You shake your enemy's senses with a shocking verse, causing the foe to move erratically.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and choose a square adjacent to the target. If the target does not enter that square before the end of its next turn, it takes psychic damage equal to your Charisma modifier.

Level 1 Daily Spell

Sprightly Rhythm — Bard Attack 1

With precision timing, you tap out a beat that forces enemies away and allows allies to reorient themselves.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Close** burst 2
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 1d10 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and you push the target a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier.
Miss: Half damage, and you push the target 1 square.
Effect: Each ally in the burst can shift 1 square as a free action.

Level 10 Utility Spell

Perfect Pitch — Bard Utility 10

With elegant poise, you focus your arcane power to aid attacks and healing.

Daily ✦ Arcane
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, you gain a +2 power bonus to damage rolls with your bard attack powers, and when you or an ally regains hit points from one of your bard or bard paragon path healing powers, that character regains additional hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.

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Level 15 Daily Spell

Strike Up the Dance — Bard Attack 15

Your foes dance to your tune now.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One, two, or three creatures
Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and you slide the target 5 squares at the start of its turn and it is immobilized (save ends both). Until it saves, the target cannot take move actions on its turn. If you target only one creature with this power, you deal 1d10 extra damage.
Miss: Half damage, and you slide the target 5 squares at the start of its next turn and it is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Level 16 Utility Spell

Musical Chairs — Bard Utility 16

Magic guides your friends to the right place or out of a bad spot.

Daily ✦ Arcane
Move Action **Close** burst 5
Target: You and each ally in burst
Effect: Each target can shift a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier as a free action or make a saving throw with a bonus to the roll equal to your Charisma modifier.

Level 17 Encounter Spell

Dissonant Imbuement — Bard Attack 17

Your strike creates a tone that resonates within your opponent, disrupting its defenses.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Charisma modifier damage. Until the end of your next turn, the target takes a penalty to AC and Reflex equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Level 19 Daily Spell

Craven Chorus — Bard Attack 19

As they flee before you, your enemies add their cries of dismay to your daunting dirge.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Fear, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in burst you can see
Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 4d10 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and you push the target its speed.
Miss: Half damage and you push the target 2 squares.

Level 22 Utility Spell

Cherub's Song — Bard Utility 22

Your cheerful verses lighten the spirit and the body.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Zone
Minor Action **Close** burst 5
Effect: You gain a fly speed equal to your speed until the end of the encounter. The burst becomes a zone of uplifting song centered on you that lasts until the end of the encounter. When you move, the zone moves with you, staying centered on you. When an ally starts his or her turn within the zone, he or she gains a fly speed equal to his or her speed + your Constitution modifier until the end of his or her next turn.

Level 23 Encounter Songs

Transference Tune — Bard Attack 23

Your magical song sets up sympathetic vibrations in your foe, relieving your woes and inflicting them on the enemy.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 3d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and you can make a saving throw against each effect on you that a save can end. Any effect that you save against is transferred to the target and lasts until the end of your next turn.

New Feats

Bard of All Trades

Prerequisite: Bard

Benefit: You gain a +3 feat bonus to all untrained skill checks.

Saving Breath

Prerequisite: Con 13, bard, *majestic word* power

Benefit: When you use *majestic word*, the target gains a bonus equal to your Constitution modifier to the next saving throw it makes before the end of your next turn.

New Magic Items

Fey Flute — Level 18

Made from lustrous reeds from the Feywild, this set of pipes fortifies the mind against the wiles common among the fey.

Wondrous Item 85,000 gp
Property: Bards can use this item as an implement for bard powers and bard paragon path powers. As an implement, it grants a +4 enhancement bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls, and it deals 4d6 extra damage on a critical hit.
Power (Daily): Standard Action. Use this power during a rest. At the end of the rest, choose yourself or an ally who remained within 20 squares of you during the rest. Until the end of that character's next short rest or extended rest, he or she gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses against charm, fear, and psychic attacks and a +2 power bonus to saving throws against charm or fear effects.
Song of Rest: The bonus to saving throws equals your Intelligence modifier.

Rhythmic War Drum — Level 12

Reindeer hide stretches across the ornate drum of horn and wood. Those listening to its beat gain steadiness of body and fleetness of feet.

Wondrous Item 13,000 gp
Property: Bards can use this item as an implement for bard powers and bard paragon path powers. As an implement, it grants a +3 enhancement bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls, and it deals 3d6 extra damage on a critical hit.
Power (Daily): Standard Action. Use this power during a rest. At the end of the rest, you and each ally who remained within 20 squares of you during the rest are affected by this power. Until the end of each affected character's next short rest or extended rest, he or she gains a +1 power bonus to speed and can increase or decrease any forced movement by 1 square.
Song of Rest: The bonus to speed is +2.

Sitar of Restfulness — Level 7

The sweet sounds of this breathtaking wooden stringed instrument instill a luck that can be realized only through boldness in action.

Wondrous Item 2,600 gp
Property: Bards can use this item as an implement for bard powers and bard paragon path powers. As an implement, it grants a +2 enhancement bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls, and it deals 2d6 extra damage on a critical hit.
Power (Daily): Standard Action. Use this power during a rest. At the end of the rest, you and each ally who remained within 20 squares of you during the rest gains 6 temporary hit points.
Song of Rest: The temporary hit points equal 9.

About the Author

Arthur Wright is father of three living in upstate New York. A long time gamer and D&D® player, he has played every incarnation of the D&D game. When he's not playing games or spending time with his family, Arthur is pursuing his dreams of having a work related to the D&D game published, having a D&D book with "Arthur Wright" in the credits, and someday appearing on the show *Survivor*. One down, two to go.

Class Acts: Wardens of the Breach

By Robert Schwalb
Illustration by Sarah Stone

Long ages separate the present from the days when the primordials ruled the world, yet their influence lingers still. In remote corners and forgotten regions, edifices to the primordials remain in the form of monuments, strange and unstable landforms, and violent storms spawned from extraplanar rumblings. The threat these instances pose have lost much of their fury, but from time to time, the old powers return to the world, violating the primal wards hedging out both the elemental and divine from charting the world's course, and visiting chaos of a kind that echoes the conflict in the world's earliest era.

The elemental breach is the most dangerous intrusion from the Elemental Chaos. Planar scholars define these events as singularities formed when the Elemental Chaos wells up and oozes into another plane. Most breaches don't last more than a few minutes, but some have lasted years and centuries. To prevent the eruption from spreading and drawing the natural world (or other plane) into the Elemental Chaos, primal champions weave potent wards to contain the anomaly and mitigate the damage it creates. With these safeguards in place, a few dedicates remain to monitor the breach and ensure the magical bulwark holds fast.

The wards prevent the breach from spreading, but not even these potent rituals can prevent elemental energy from contaminating the nearby landscape and the creatures and spirits populating it. Primal champions charged with monitoring the ward soon discover the primal spirits with whom they are allied acquire many of the traits and characteristics of the breach. These spirits become wilder, aggressive, and more dangerous. Many guardians work to cleanse the affected spirits, but a few find their unusual qualities useful.

While any primal character might find his or her evocations altered in minor ways by communing with these spirits, wardens, in particular, might experience astonishing changes with their powers, especially in the guardian forms they assume. Such defenders are called breach wardens.

The breach warden works with contaminated spirits to power his or her evocations and thus wields primal power influenced and altered by elemental energy. Compared to other wardens, the breach warden favors battlefield control by setting up damaging zones, manipulating terrain, and discouraging certain choices. The corrupted primal spirits help breach wardens confront several enemies at once through catastrophic attacks imbued with elemental energy.

The Breach

A roiling, seething realm polluted by chaotic energy, the Breach features lightning gathered in pools, thunder rocking the ground, and liquid fire falling from the heavens.

The Breach is a warped and tortured region, assailed by energy spilling forth from the Elemental Chaos. Everything is wrong here: Mountains drift through the skies, ice forms over molten rock, and dark columns formed from shrieking winds swirl in place. Patches of normal terrain form islands here: Bits of forest or ruin remain as the only evidence of what the land was like before the breach. Few people live here, because the land cannot sustain natural life for long, but elemental beasts and humanoids exist here—some are benign, but most are malevolent.

Associated Skills: Arcana, Endurance
Associated Languages: Primordial

New Evocations

Wardens working with corrupted primal spirits find their evocations colored by elemental magic. Many powers create control zones or influence enemy actions by punishing attacks, movement, and other actions. While designed for wardens with the Breach background, any warden can use these powers.

Level 1 Encounter Evocation

Tremor Slam — Warden Attack 1

Your weapon crashes against your enemy and sends a tremor to strike another foe whose attention you have bound.

Encounter ✦ Primal, Thunder, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, and one enemy marked by you that you can see takes thunder damage equal to your Strength modifier and becomes immobilized until the end of your next turn.

Level 1 Daily Evocation

Form of the Walking Conflagration
Warden Attack 1

Flames spring up across your body and spread until you become living fire. Heat pours from your body and scorches your foes, but the primal spirits ensure the flames do not harm you.

Daily ✦ Fire, Polymorph, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You assume the guardian form of the walking conflagration until the end of the encounter. While you are in this form, you gain resist 5 fire. Until the end of the encounter, when you mark an enemy using your Nature's Wrath class feature, that enemy gains vulnerable 3 fire damage until the mark ends.

Once during this encounter, you can make the following weapon attack while you are in this form.

Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage.
Effect: The target takes ongoing 5 fire damage and is dazed (save ends). While a target is dazed by this effect, whenever an enemy starts its turn in a square adjacent to the target, that enemy takes fire damage equal to your Constitution modifier or your Wisdom modifier.

Level 3 Encounter Evocation

Breath of Chaos — Warden Attack 3

An upward sweep of your weapon summons the breath of chaos to gust through your enemies' ranks as your form fades slightly.

Encounter ✦ Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Close** blast 2
Target: Each enemy in blast
Attack: Strength vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1[W] damage, and you slide the target 1 square. If the target is marked by you, it takes 1d6 extra damage.
Effect: You become insubstantial until the start of your next turn, and you can shift up to your speed to any unoccupied square adjacent to the blast.

Level 5 Daily Evocation

Boiling Cloud — Warden Attack 5

You sacrifice your foes to summon the hunger of Codrichun: a noxious cloud of blood and abrading grit. The cloud boils around you until you hurl it away in a terrifying blast.

Daily ✦ Primal, Zone
Minor Action **Close** burst 1
Effect: The burst creates a zone of blood and grit that lasts until the end of the encounter. The zone moves with you, remaining centered on your space. You and your allies in the zone have concealment. Marked enemies that start their turns within the zone take damage equal to your Constitution modifier or Wisdom modifier. While the zone is active, you can make the following weapon attack once.

Standard Action **Close** blast 3
Effect: The zone ends.
Target: Each enemy in blast and each enemy adjacent to you
Attack: Strength + 3 vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).

Level 7 Encounter Evocation

Forge of Fire and Smoke — Warden Attack 7

You call upon the fury of the forge to destroy your enemies with primal fire.

Encounter ✦ Fire, Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Close** blast 3
Target: Each creature in blast
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage plus 1d12 fire damage.
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, creatures inside the area of the blast have concealment.

Level 9 Daily Evocation

Form of the Vengeful Storm — Warden Attack 9

A howling wind heralds your transformation and, in answer, your body fades until only violence remains.

Daily ✦ Polymorph, Thunder
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You assume the guardian form of the vengeful storm until the end of the encounter. While you are in this form, you gain fly 4 (altitude limit 2, hover). In addition, each time a creature starts its turn adjacent to you, you can slide that creature 1 square as a free action.

Once during this encounter, you can make the following weapon attack while you are in this form.

Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage.
Effect: Whenever the target deals damage to you or an ally with an attack, the target takes 5 thunder damage and you slide the target 1 square as a free action (save ends). The target takes a -2 penalty to saving throws to end this condition.

Level 13 Encounter Evocation

Drown in Mud — Warden Attack 13

Your enemies' vitality mingles with the ground, turning it into a soupy morass.

Encounter ✦ Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, the area of the burst counts as difficult terrain and any creature (other than you) in the area of the burst that takes damage falls prone.

Level 15 Daily Evocation

Form of the Magma Brute — Warden Attack 15

Smoke curls up from your body, spilling from fissures forming in your flesh. In an instant, fire follows to lend dread strength to your attacks.

Daily ✦ Fire, Polymorph, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You assume the guardian form of the magma brute until the end of the encounter. While you are in this form, your melee attacks deal 1d6 extra fire damage. In addition, whenever you take damage from an attack, each enemy adjacent to you takes fire damage equal to your Strength modifier.

Once during this encounter, you can make the following weapon attack while you are in this form.

Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 fire damage and is slowed (save ends both).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is immobilized instead of slowed (save ends).
Aftereffect: The target's space and each square adjacent to it become filled with rubble until cleared. Rubble-filled squares count as difficult terrain.

Level 17 Encounter Evocation

Thunderhead Strike — Warden Attack 17

Booming thunder accompanies the impact from your weapon, echoing all around with powerful, violent energy.

Encounter ✦ Primal, Thunder, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target falls prone. If the target stands up or willingly moves from its space before the end of your next turn, it and each enemy adjacent to it takes thunder damage equal to your Strength modifier.

Level 19 Daily Evocation

Drown in Blood — Warden Attack 19

Your attack wreaks havoc with your enemy's body, causing its vitality to well up from within and pour out from it in a flood.

Daily ✦ Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 damage and is dazed (save ends both). If the target is bloodied or reduced to 0 hit points by this ongoing damage, each enemy adjacent to it takes 10 damage.

Level 23 Encounter Evocation

Wicked Flames — Warden Attack 23

You collapse into a pool of fire that burns and scatters all foes in your midst.

Encounter ✦ Fire, Primal, Zone
Minor Action **Close** burst 3
Effect: The burst becomes a zone of ravenous flames that lasts until the end of your next turn. Remove yourself from play until the zone ends. While the zone remains, you can make the following attack with the zone.
Opportunity Action
Trigger: An enemy enters the zone or starts its turn there
Target: The triggering enemy
Attack: Strength + 9 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d10 + Strength modifier fire damage, and you slide the target 3 squares.

Level 25 Daily Evocation

Form of the Seething Sandstorm
Warden Attack 25

Your form and body surrender to a swirling cloud of scouring sand. While in this form, you can flow over an enemy to inundate it with shredding winds.

Daily ✦ Polymorph, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You assume the guardian form of the seething sandstorm until the end of the encounter. While you are in this form, you ignore difficult terrain, gain resist 5 to damage, and you can compress your body to squeeze through a 1-inch-wide crack. Cracks and other openings that are more than 1 inch wide do not slow you at all.
Once during this encounter, you can make the following weapon attack while you are in this form.
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Effect: Before the attack, shift one-half your speed.
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you grab the target. Each time the target starts its turn grabbed by this attack, it takes 10 damage.
Miss: Half damage, and you shift one-half your speed.

Level 27 Encounter Evocation

Crimson Agony Tide — Warden Attack 27

When you wrench your weapon free from the enemy, you release a spray of blood.

Encounter ✦ Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you make the following secondary attack.
Close blast 5
Secondary Target: Each creature in blast
Secondary Attack: Strength vs. Fortitude
Hit: You push the target 2 squares, and it is blinded until the start of your next turn.

Level 29 Daily Evocation

Form of the Erupting Volcano
Warden Attack 29

Rocky plates form across your body and your head shines with a fiery glow. At your command, you summon the volcano's fury to visit fire and lava to all nearby.

Daily ✦ Fire, Poison, Polymorph, Primal
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You assume the guardian form of the erupting volcano until the end of the encounter. While you are in this form, you gain blindsight 10 and your space and all squares within 2 squares of you are heavily obscured by smoke and cinders. Creatures other than you that end their turn in a square obscured by this power take 5 fire and poison damage.
Once during this encounter, you can make the following attack while you are in this form.
Standard Action **Close** burst 5
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Strength + 9 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d12 + Strength modifier damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends both).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is instead immobilized and takes ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends both).
Second Failed Saving Throw: The target is instead petrified and gains resist 10 all (save ends both).

Breach Warden

"I am creation's bulwark against chaos. None shall pass without feeling my wrath."

Prerequisite: Warden

Long communion with corrupted primal spirits left its mark on you and though you can still work unspoiled primal magic, much of who you are and what you can do is shadowed by the Elemental Chaos. The primordial plane has a hold on your body and soul, and you cannot so easily shrug off its touch. Now, in all that you do, its influence shines through in the flames dancing across your weapon and the earth trembling beneath your feet. Through sheer determination, you turn this dread power to your advantage.

Breach Warden Features

Elemental Breach (11th level): After each of your extended rests, choose a damage type from the following: acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder. The choice remains until you take your next extended rest, at which point you can choose the same damage type or replace it with another.

Whenever you take damage of the type you chose or you score a critical hit using a warden attack power, each enemy marked by you takes damage of the chosen type equal to your Constitution modifier.

Breaching Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack and this attack hits, each enemy you have marked takes damage equal to your Constitution modifier of a type matching the type you chose for your Elemental Breach class feature.

Elemental Wind (16th level): Whenever you use your second wind, until the end of your next turn, each enemy adjacent to you and each enemy marked by you gains vulnerable to the damage type you chose for your Elemental Breach class feature equal to your Constitution modifier.

Breach Warden Powers

Venting Breach — Breach Warden Attack 11

The primal spirits preserving reality's bounds relax their vigil to loose raw elemental energy to scourge the enemies around you.

Encounter ✦ Primal, Teleportation, Weapon, Varies
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage. The attack gains a damage type and keyword matching the damage type you chose for your Elemental Breach class feature.
Effect: You teleport 5 squares.

Recall the Breach — Breach Warden Utility 12

Your spirit allies funnel the elemental breach's power into your body so that your weapon and armor resonates with chaotic power.

Daily ✦ Primal, Stance, Varies
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You hit with a weapon attack granted by your guardian form
Effect: Your attack deals 2d6 extra damage of a damage type matching the type chosen for your Elemental Breach class feature. Also, until the end of the encounter, when an enemy adjacent to you hits you with a melee attack, that enemy takes damage equal to your Constitution modifier or Wisdom modifier. The damage type matches the type you chose for your Elemental Breach class feature.

Form of the Living Breach
Breach Warden Attack 20

Your normal form sloughs away to reveal the chaotic energy composing the breach. Your foes find themselves drawn toward you to face the elemental storm you embody.

Daily ✦ Polymorph, Primal, Varies
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You assume the guardian form of the living breach until the end of the encounter. While you are in this form, you gain a +2 bonus to all defenses. In addition, when an enemy starts its turn within 3 squares of you, as a free action you pull the target 1 square and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Once during this encounter, you can make the following weapon attack while you are in this form.

Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 4[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 damage of a damage type matching the type you chose for your Elemental Breach class feature (save ends).
Each Failed Saving Throw: Each enemy adjacent to the target takes 5 damage of a damage type matching the ongoing damage.

New Feats

The following feats provide additional options for wardens affiliated with the Breach, though any warden that meets the prerequisites can take these feats.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Buffeting Winds

Prerequisite: Genasi, warden, *windwalker* power
Benefit: When you use your *windwalker* power, you can slide each enemy marked by you a number of squares equal to your Constitution modifier.

Earth Cage

Prerequisite: Genasi, warden, *earthshock* power
Benefit: Targets hit by your *earthshock* power are also slowed until the start of your next turn.

Elemental Boon

Prerequisite: Warden, Font of Life class feature
Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to saving throws made at the start of your turn against ongoing effects and conditions with the acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder keywords.

Font of Chaos

Prerequisite: Warden, Font of Life class feature
Benefit: When you succeed on a saving throw granted by your Font of Life class feature, you slide one random creature adjacent to you 1 square.

Go with the Flow

Prerequisite: Genasi, warden, *swiftcurrent* power

Benefit: As long as your *swiftcurrent* power is unexpended, you can shift 1 square as a free action whenever you mark three or more creatures using Nature's Wrath.

Roiling Storm

Prerequisite: Warden, Stormheart class feature

Benefit: When you use your second wind, you can shift a number of squares equal to your Constitution modifier instead of sliding enemies marked by you.

Storm Manifested

Prerequisite: Genasi, warden, *promise of storm* power

Benefit: Whenever you hit with an attack benefiting from your *promise of storm* power, you slide each enemy marked by you 1 square as a free action and those enemies are slowed until the end of your next turn.

Storm's Lightning

Prerequisite: Warden, Stormheart class feature

Benefit: When you use your second wind, each enemy marked by you takes lightning damage equal to your Constitution modifier.

Untamed Fire

Prerequisite: Genasi, warden, *firepulse* power

Benefit: When you hit an enemy with your *firepulse* attack power, each enemy marked by you takes fire damage equal to your Strength modifier.

Paragon Tier Feat

Any feat in this section is available to a character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Gusting Rebuke

Prerequisite: 11th level, warden, Stormheart class feature

Benefit: When enemy adjacent to you that is marked by you hits and damages one of your allies with an attack that does not include you as a target, you can push the enemy a number of squares equal to your Constitution modifier as an immediate reaction.

Epic Tier Feat

Any feat in this section is available to a character of 21st level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Mountain's Wrath

Prerequisite: 21st level, warden, Nature's Wrath class feature

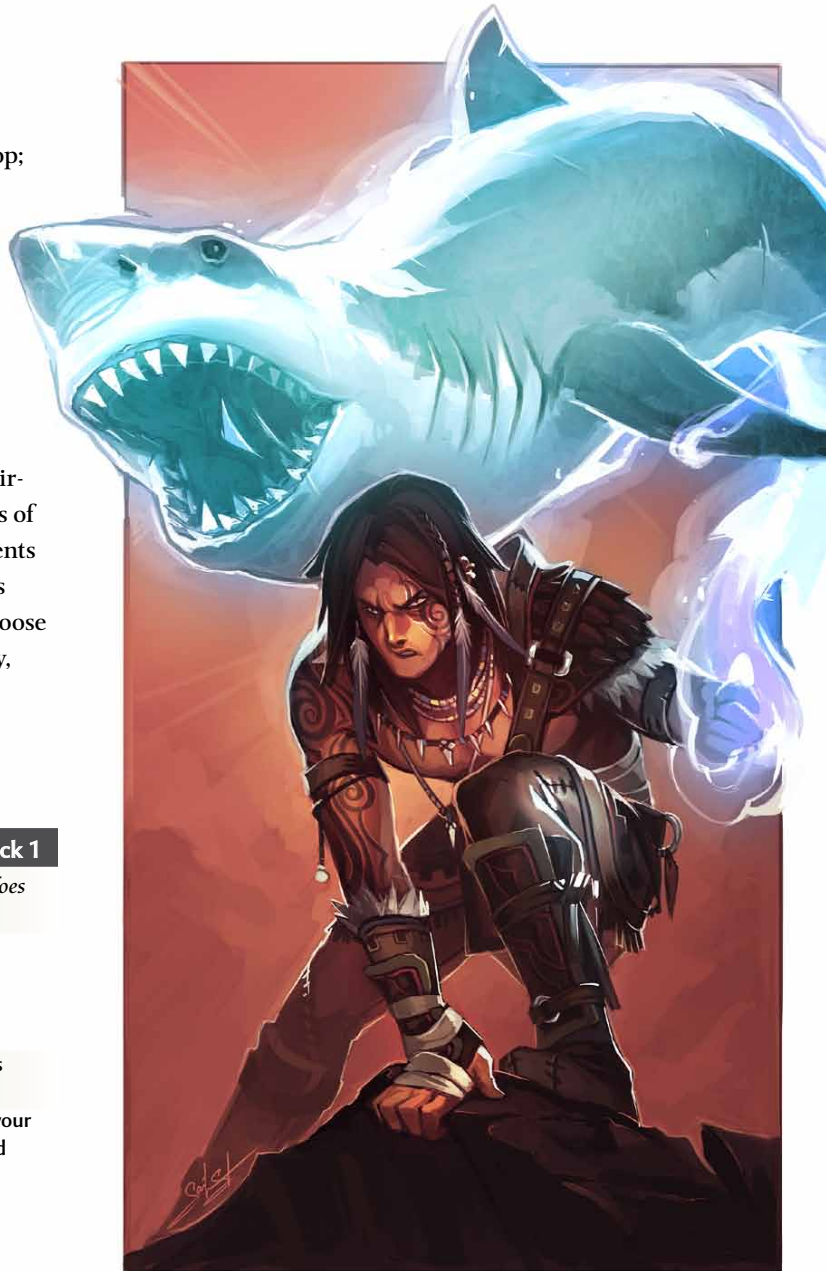
Benefit: When you mark three or more enemies using Nature's Wrath, you gain resistance to all damage equal to 2 + the number of enemies you marked until the start of your next turn.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer whose more recent work can be found in the *Player's Handbook™ 3*, *Martial Power™ 2*, and *Draconomicon™ 2: Metallic Dragons*.

Class Acts: Shaman

By Tavis Allison
Illustration by Sarah Stone



Body, Mind, and Spirit

Historians know that the most bitter and the most frequent conflicts are the wars a people fight against themselves. Two traditions of shamanic teaching are the legacy of such a struggle. Ancient shamans believed that life is made of body, mind, and spirit. All agreed that spirit should be paramount, but their disagreement over whether body or mind should be next most important became a centuries-long clash. Seeking victory in this conflict, each group developed a different mastery for their spirit companions. Shamans of the body learned to turn spirit into corporeal weight, while their rivals gave their spirit companion a mind of its own and sent it into a foe's brain to control thoughts and actions.

Even the mortals who preserve the teachings of these factions have largely forgotten their conflict, but the immortal spirits remember. Many elder powers were recruited into this war and have never ceased fighting for their cause. Learning the shamanic lore of body or mind might make you the ally of one spirit conspiracy and the enemy of another. Those who embrace the techniques of both paths risk becoming seen as a double agent.

Shamans of the Body

Nature spirits loyal to the faction of the body are typically either massive or they are small but multitudinous. The best known include Omphamor, a sullen and suspicious colossal squid; Darkness-at-Day, an easily angered flock of birds; Uruu Broken-Tusk, a wooly mammoth slow to rouse but difficult to stop; and their greatest general, the herd of bison called Hulculmak, the Sea of Flesh. All are motivated to thwart the faction of the mind, but shamans might instead convince these spirits to aid those who perform deeds of might, endurance, or gluttony in their name. Hulculmak once rewarded a shaman who sought and ate the flesh of five exotic beasts.

Teaching in this path might come from the spirits directly or from a lineage of mortals. Shamans of the body value trading blows in melee, and students learn to fight in heavy armor as well as the path's unique evocations. Most shamans of the body choose a protector spirit, and many are themselves hairy, imposing, and bearlike.

Level 1 Daily Evocation

Massive Companion — **Shaman Attack 1**

Your spirit companion grows huge and solid, shaking off foes and sheltering your allies.

Daily ✦ Implement, Primal, Spirit
Standard Action — **Close** burst spirit 1
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target falls prone.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, allies adjacent to your spirit companion gain cover against ranged, close, and area attacks.

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Level 2 Utility Evocation

Assistance of the Strong Spirit Shaman Utility 2

You grant your spirit companion the mass and leverage it needs to drag a companion to safety.

At-Will ✦ Primal, Spirit
Standard Action **Close** burst 20
Target: One ally in burst adjacent to your spirit companion or one object in burst you can lift adjacent to your spirit companion
Effect: You slide the target a number of squares equal to half your speed, and your spirit companion moves to a square adjacent to the target.

Level 6 Utility Evocation

Herder of Hulculmak Shaman Utility 6

Like a shepherd, you guide your flock to swim through the sea of flesh.

Encounter ✦ Primal
Minor Action **Close** burst 2
Target: You and each ally in burst
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, each target can move through spaces occupied by your enemies.

Level 7 Encounter Evocation

Bear Hug Shaman Attack 7

Your foe is surprised to be in the brutal embrace of your unexpectedly solid spirit companion.

Encounter ✦ Implement, Primal, Spirit
Standard Action **Melee** spirit 1
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 + Wisdom modifier damage. Until the end of your next turn or until your target is not adjacent to your spirit companion at the end of any turn, the target is restrained.

Level 16 Utility Evocation

One Spirit, One Body Shaman Utility 16

Drawing on the unity of body and spirit, you dissolve your flesh and reform it in the place where your spirit companion stood.

Encounter ✦ Primal, Spirit, Teleportation
Move Action **Personal**
Requirement: Your spirit companion must be within 10 squares of you.
Effect: You and your spirit companion trade places.

Level 23 Encounter Evocation

Behemoth's Club Shaman Attack 23

Your spirit companion looms tall and solid enough to pick up one of your foes and use it to batter another.

Encounter ✦ Implement, Primal, Spirit
Standard Action **Melee** spirit 1
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, your spirit companion grows to size Large. If your spirit companion has insufficient space to increase in size, this power automatically fails.
Primary Target: One creature of Large size or smaller
Primary Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier damage. Until the end of your next turn, your spirit companion grabs the target. Make a secondary attack.
Secondary Target: One creature adjacent to your spirit companion or to the primary target
Secondary Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target falls prone. The primary target also takes 5 + Wisdom modifier damage.

Shamans of the Mind

The elder spirits recruited to the faction of the mind typically take the form of animals known for secrecy and wisdom, such as owls, or mysterious natural phenomena, like the aurora borealis. Those known to fight for this cause include the officious hermit crab Kalka-Kylla, scheming Thalassacil the brain coral, the secretive mole Star-Nosed Rik-Vak, and the tornado Gray Roarer, the mastermind of these elder spirits. Apart from humiliating their rivals in the body faction, the interests of these elders focus on lore and discovery. Shamans unwilling to strike at their counterparts might nevertheless earn favor from these spirits by uncovering lost sagas or creating primal maps.

The techniques of the mind path are preserved through oral history as well as taught by affiliated spirits. Disciples of this path value tactical mastery and choose evocations that let them maneuver their allies and spirit companions for maximum efficiency in battle. Most shamans of the mind choose stalker spirits and are themselves pantherlike in the cool and silent intensity with which they stalk their goals.

Level 1 Daily Evocation

Spirit of Consuming Terror Shaman Attack 1

The form a spirit takes is a habit of mind. You overcome that habit and morph your spirit companion into a terrifying form, which you send against your foe.

Daily ✦ Fear, Implement, Primal, Psychic, Spirit
Standard Action **Melee** spirit 1
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + Wisdom modifier psychic damage.
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls against allies that are adjacent to your spirit companion.
Sustain Standard: Repeat the attack against the same or a different target.

Level 3 Encounter Evocation

Infectious Spark Shaman Attack 3

Your spirit companion dissolves when struck, leaving its mind behind to compel your enemy to an undesired action.

Encounter ✦ Implement, Primal, Psychic, Spirit
Immediate Interrupt **Melee** spirit 1
Trigger: Your spirit companion is hit by a melee attack
Target: The triggering attacker
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + Wisdom modifier psychic damage, and the target makes a melee basic attack against an enemy of your choice. Your spirit companion disappears, and you take no damage from the spirit companion disappearing.

Level 6 Utility Evocation

Roaming Mind, Roving Spirit Shaman Utility 6

By sharing a part of your intellect with your spirit companion, your spirit companion gains the ability to act independently and you can perceive with its senses.

Daily ✦ Primal, Spirit
Standard Action **Ranged** 20
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, you do not need line of sight or line of effect to your spirit companion, and can move your spirit companion beyond its normal range. You perceive the surroundings of your spirit companion as if you were in its place. You cannot make attacks through your spirit companion when you do not have line of effect to the spirit companion or when it is further than 20 squares away.

Level 15 Daily Evocation

Gray Roarer's Rampage Shaman Attack 15

Your spirit companion passes through the heads of your foes like a whirlwind, scattering their thoughts and directing their movement.

Daily ✦ Implement, Primal, Psychic, Spirit
Standard Action **Melee** spirit 1
Effect: Your spirit companion can move 4 squares as part of this attack. During this movement, it can pass through squares occupied by your enemies.
Target: Each enemy whose space your spirit companion entered as part of this movement
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier psychic damage, you slide the target 1 square, and the target is dazed (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target grants combat advantage to your allies until the end of your next turn.

Level 25 Daily Evocation

Spirit of the Brain Mole Shaman Attack 25

Your spirit companion leaps at your foe's head, shrinking as it travels until it is just the right size to disappear into the enemy's brain and take over.

Daily ✦ Charm, Implement, Primal, Psychic, Spirit
Standard Action **Melee** spirit 1
Target: One creature
Effect: Your spirit companion disappears.
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier psychic damage, and the target is dominated (save ends). When the target saves against being dominated, your spirit companion appears in a space adjacent to the target.
Miss: Half damage, and the target makes a basic attack against a creature of your choice.

About the Author

Tavis Allison is the co-author of the *Dragon*® magazine article "Warden Essentials" and several other D&D® projects that he can't wait to see released so that he can mention them in his About the Author section. Tavis plays and DMs with the New York Red Box.

Winning Races: Humans

By Stephen Radney MacFarland
Illustration by Alex Aparin

"If persistence were the only virtue, every human would become exalted. Thankfully that is not the case."
—Quinsallas, archmage of the Spiral Tower

Even after the fall of Nerath, humans have continued to not only persist, but thrive in a world gone dark with savagery. Huddled in their settlements, warmed by their fires and their persevering sense of hope and confidence in their own abilities, the human race already dreams of its next great empire. Select few put those dreams to action, eager to settle the wilds, or at least eradicate the dangers that now claim them, one sword swing or spell at a time.

With their ability to adapt and prosper in the most rugged terrain and the harshest of conditions, humans have an uncanny knack for putting aside petty differences and pooling their resources in times of great need—even if such truces last only as long as necessity dictates. While the dozens of scattered baronies, petty kingdoms, and free cities clash and collude in a game of alliances and rivalries that would make a drow matron proud, the game's attrition only slows the races' momentum. The question is not will humans build the next great empire—it is when.

This sense of perseverance can push many humans into the darkness of the wilds, though each has personal reasons for venturing forth in this manner. Their motivations can be both grandiose and base at the same time, and their methods altruistic or egotistical. However, their ultimate goal is to vanquish the world's darkness one fire, one foray, and one settlement at a time.

Human Pioneer

Humans push into the wild lands, looking not only for treasure, but also to find their own niche outside the power structures of petty nobility and dirty streets of walled settlements. Sometimes they cling to the ideals of the civilization left behind; other times they are rugged opportunists looking to carve out a section of the world all for their own. They are often headstrong and tough as nails.

Background

Child of the Wildlands: Many human children are born to a far-flung homestead in a wilderness claimed and somewhat tamed by their parents or extended family. As a child, you did not know the safety of walls, but only the semblance of civilization your family brought to a stretch of wilderness. Maybe that homestead still exists as a bastion of light that survives or thrives in the dark wild lands. Maybe your home was swallowed up by the savagery around it. Whatever the case, you have an understanding of the dangers of the wilderness and how to survive them that will never leave you.

Associated Skills: Endurance, Nature

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Feats

The following feats provide your character with some options for his or her role in the world.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Die Hard

Prerequisite: Con 13, human

Benefit: When you have failed two death saving throws since your last rest, you gain a +5 feat bonus to death saving throws and can spend a healing surge on a result of 15 or higher. If you have no healing surges, your condition does not change.

Don't Count Me Out

Prerequisite: Human

Benefit: While you are bloodied, you gain a +2 feat bonus to saving throws against effects that immobilize, daze, stun, or weaken you. Increase this bonus to +3 if you have the Human Perseverance feat.

Frantic Recovery

Prerequisite: Human

Benefit: When you spend an action point to gain an extra action, until the end of your turn, you can use your second wind as a minor action.

Paragon Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of 11th level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Pain Doesn't Hurt

Prerequisite: 11th level, human

Benefit: While you are bloodied, you gain a +2 feat bonus to saving throws against ongoing damage. Increase this bonus to +3 if you have the Human Perseverance feat. In addition, the first time you are bloodied in each encounter, you ignore all ongoing damage until the end of your next turn.

Persistent Threat

Prerequisite: 11th level, human

Benefit: While you are dazed, you can still flank enemies, and you can take an opportunity action if you haven't taken one since the start of your last turn.

Epic Tier Feat

The feat in this section is available to a character of 21st level or higher who meets the prerequisites.

Perfect Recovery

Prerequisite: 21st level, human

Benefit: When you spend an action point to take an extra action, end one effect on you that a save can end.

Aldron's Firebox

First created by the famous wizard and explorer Aldron Farwanderer (writer of the *Aldron's Chapbooks*, which are travel journals still used by treasure hunters) during the early days of the Nerath Empire, these fireboxes are both prized and popular with the members of ranger bands, any kind of explorer, and tribal peoples. Simple and relatively cheap, many general stores and traders carry at least one of these boxes. In the borderlands, numerous wizards and artificers create fireboxes either to aid exploration into the wilderness, or to gain profit while they pursue their arcane purposes at the edge of civilization.

Emergent Campsite: What seems like a windswept hill on a rainy night becomes an inviting campsite when the characters move within 5 squares of an abandoned *Aldron's firebox*. Although the campsite is long abandoned, it might give clues to its former occupant and that creature's fate.

Thanks for the Help: After saving a trapper from a band of orc marauders, the trapper invites the characters to sup with him around his *Aldron's firebox*. If the characters express any kind of interest in *firebox*, the trapper resists trading one of his most prized possessions, but knows the story of an explorer who lost his way looking for the ancient ruins of cursed Bethuun and who also possessed a firebox. Although the trapper has never entered the cursed site, he knows its location. Find the fate of the missing explorer, and the characters likely find the *firebox*.

Magic Items

Aldron's Firebox Level 2

This small box is made of darkly stained pine with a number of arcane symbols branded into the side.

Wondrous Item 520 gp

Property: This box unfolds (a standard action) to reveal a magic campfire. This fire is warm, comfortable, and cannot be doused by any action beyond refolding the box (another standard action).

Civilization's Crusader

Some enter the wilderness to eke out an existence, and others seek to bring the beacon of civilization to the dark corners of the world. Whether an errant paladin or priest in the service of Erathis, a potential tyrant praying to Bane, or a well-meaning idealist who want to make the world safe for all peoples, these humans tirelessly work to make the world a more civilized place. Often, such work is done with the sword, but these crusaders also use diplomacy and understanding to make friends and allies of more reasonable creatures encountered in the wilderness. Often they learn just as much from those allies as they offer in return.

Forester's Axe Level 2+

This normal looking axe cuts a swath though plant life of all sorts.

Lvl 2	+1	520 gp	Lvl 17	+4	65,000 gp
Lvl 7	+2	2,600 gp	Lvl 22	+5	325,000 gp
Lvl 12	+3	13,000 gp	Lvl 27	+6	1,625,000 gp

Weapon: Axe

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d8 damage per plus, or +1d10 damage per plus against plant creatures

Power (Daily): Standard Action. *Effect:* You destroy vegetation, changing all difficult terrain made up primarily of flora in a close blast 3 to normal terrain.
Level 12: Close blast 5.
Level 22: All difficult, blocking, and challenging terrain made up primarily of flora in a close blast 5 becomes normal terrain.

Background

Civilization's Herald: You are an idealist—a person who believes that civilization and the rule of law, while not flawless, creates the best existence for all people. Maybe that rule of law comes under a strong central authority, such as a tyrant or dictator. Maybe it is more benign and inclusive. Whatever the case, civilization is a far better thing than the darkness and savagery that rules most of the world. And that sad state does not solve itself. It needs brave people to bring the light of civilization into the dark of wilderness, and to help the good people trapped in that savagery who want a better, more ordered and stable, life.

Associated Skills: Diplomacy, Insight

Feats

The following feats provide your character with more options to bring civilization to areas of savagery.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Bane's Tyrannical Transference [Divinity]

Prerequisite: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship Bane

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *Bane's tyrannical transference*.

Bane's Tyrannical Transference Feat Power

You call on Bane to transfer a hindrance to another—someone better suited to endure its consequences.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Immediate Interrupt **Close** burst 5
Channel Divinity: You can use only one channel divinity power per encounter.
Trigger: You or an ally within range becomes dazed, immobilized, stunned, or slowed
Effect: You transfer that effect to you or to another ally within the burst.

Progress of Erathis [Divinity]

Prerequisite: Channel Divinity class feature, must worship Erathis

Benefit: You can invoke the power of your deity to use *progress of Erathis*.

Progress of Erathis — Feat Power

With this quick prayer to Erathis, you call your allies to move forward though the wilderness.
Encounter ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Close** burst 5
Channel Divinity: You can use only one Channel Divinity power per encounter.
Target: You and each ally in burst
Effect: The target ignores difficult terrain until the end of your next turn.

Skill Swap

Prerequisite: 2nd level, human. Bonus At-Will Power racial trait

Benefit: You swap out your bonus at-will attack power for a skill power for which you meet the prerequisites. You can change this power by retraining the feat.

Magic Items

Beacon of Erathis — Level 4+

Taking the form of a cog alight with the flame of hope, this holy symbol brings light to the darkness.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Implement (Holy Symbol)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d8 fire damage per plus
Power (At-Will): Minor Action. The holy symbol sheds bright light to a radius of 20 squares. You can douse or reactivate the light as a minor action.
Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with a fire or radiant attack using this holy symbol. *Effect:* The creature you hit sheds bright light to a radius of 20 squares and grants combat advantage (save ends both).

Scepter of Bane — Level 4+

This powerful scepter, tipped with the symbol of the Lord of Tyrants, is both a vicious weapon and a powerful implement.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Weapon: Mace
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d12 per plus when used as a weapon, or +1d8 when used as a holy symbol
Property: The *scepter of Bane* can be used as a holy symbol.
Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You score a critical hit against a target while using the *scepter of Bane*. *Effect:* You do not deal the extra damage for scoring a critical hit, but instead you dominate the target until the end of your next turn.

About the Author

Born on a stormy Christmas day, in our nation's capital, during the Nixon administration, the stars were definitely wrong when Stephen Radney-MacFarland came screaming into the world. Spending most of his impressionable years as a vagabond and ne'r-do-well, Stephen eventually settled in the Northwest to waste his life on roleplaying games.

Winning Races
Bloodlines of Bael Turath: The Broken Mirrors

By Peter Schaefer
Illustration by Alex Aparin

In the time of Bael Turath, when the people of that nation were strongest and had no fear of their land falling in war, multiple factions vied for influence over the state. Those who dedicated themselves to wrath and taking vengeance for wrongs done them always held the most power, and their legacy was best known to the world and survived Bael Turath in the main body of the tiefling race.

The wrathful faction was not the only one that survived enough to leave its mark on the world. Some descendants of Bael Turath bear the mark and the power of Levistus, with whom their ancestors made their pacts. They do not lash out at the world in revenge and anger; they inflict their displeasure on the world constantly in the form of ill luck and general misfortune. During the time of their empire, they had a courtly name. In the years since, they have been called broken mirrors.

Misfortune is never far from a tiefling who wishes ill luck upon the world. Adversity follows these tieflings like a loyal hound, manifesting in small accidents of bad timing and poor luck for those around him or her. Where such a tiefling walks, others trip and step into puddles of mud. Where he or she drinks, others spill or are served the wrong beverages. Where he or she sleeps, others find lice and suffer from restless nights. This bubble of ill fortune fades only while the tiefling has cursed a specific creature with focused misfortune.

Tieflings with the mantle of misfortune never suffer these effects directly; another always purchases the rotten rations or takes the tumble down the stairs. In most communities, the misfortune finds a way to return upon the source. Neighbors blame the tiefling for every dropped dish, artisans fault the tiefling for every misplaced tool, smiths hold the tiefling responsible for every burn, politicians believe the tiefling is culpable for every misspoken word they utter, and so on. A nimble tongue is necessary for a tiefling who wants to live among others for long; having one can calm others' anger or redirect their suspicions. Most tieflings with this legacy become reclusive or find company with people who are forgiving or uncaring enough to ignore the small misfortunes.

Tiefling Adventurers

Three sample tiefling adventurers are described below.

Aramus lost his way in a desert as a youth. After days of thirst, hunger, and hallucinations, he received instructions from the spirits—or thought he did. His was a calling to savage battle. He returned from the desert carrying a shard of bone from a huge beast like a greatsword, and he defeated all comers. Then and now, Aramus revels in the chaos of combat, the chance that fortune could smile and frown on any person who takes the risk. Of course, fortune frowns

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more frequently on Aramus's enemies. With a small band of allies, Aramus defends the weak, because if he pitted himself against the heroes he'd run out of opponents too soon.

The tiefling warlock called Happenstance embraces the random misfortunes that strike people around her. She has incorporated it into the mysterious nature she cultivates as a warlock, and though she knows her aura of ill luck stems from her infernal heritage, she attributes the specific manifestations to the stars from which she draws her power. Happenstance has formed deep friendships with a small group of adventurers who know she has no control over her heritage and deal with the small trials she causes them in good spirits.

Tolchi is a swordmage who enjoys playing with his prey. He uses the magic he has learned to come at his opponents from all sides, and his favorite toys earn the focus of his focused misfortune to make escape even more difficult. Tolchi enjoyed the morality-free mercenary life until he met Balian, an eladrin who showed him the good he could be doing. He still enjoys taking down a target a little more than he should, but he's doing it for the right reasons as he travels with Balian and her crew.

New Feats

The following feats can provide your tiefling character with some additional options.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Mantle of Misfortune [Tiefling Bloodline]

Prerequisite: Tiefling

Benefit: You gain *mantle of misfortune* as an encounter power. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus to Insight and Perception checks made against other tieflings.

Mantle of Misfortune — **Feat Power**

While the enemy remains near you, its feet slip, it drops things, and nothing goes right.

Encounter
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, enemies take a –2 penalty to attack rolls while within 5 squares of you and each time an enemy within 5 squares of you misses with an attack you can slide the target 1 square as a free action.

Accidental Tells

Prerequisite: Tiefling, Mantle of Misfortune feat

Benefit: When you make an Insight check against a creature within range of your active *mantle of misfortune* power, you can roll twice and take the better result.

Guardian's Mishaps

Prerequisite: Tiefling, Mantle of Misfortune feat, any defender

Benefit: When you slide a creature as a result of your *mantle of misfortune* power, you can mark the target until the end of the creature's next turn.

Lucky Misfortune

Prerequisite: Tiefling, Mantle of Misfortune feat

Benefit: When you slide a creature as a result of your *mantle of misfortune* power, you gain a +2 bonus to your next attack roll or skill check made before the end of your next turn.

Paragon Path

Broken Mirror

"Your luck has run out."

Prerequisite: Tiefling, Mantle of Misfortune feat

A tiefling with enough motivation and skill can tap other avenues of power within the infernal nature of her bloodline. The prize demands a price, but tieflings have experience dealing with the gifts of devils. Even though no gift comes without strings, these tieflings have found ways to leverage the bargain to their advantage. Nothing is more satisfying than cheating the cheater. Those who are brave enough can gain more without giving anything up. By taking more of this power, they can gather the might they need to found New Turath, or they can keep the power out of the hands of those who would dare such a dangerous blasphemy.

You have claimed the power of the broken mirrors, whether it is more of the power you already have or an ability that is new to you. Perhaps you stole the power from the devil that originally granted it to your forebears, or you convinced another tiefling to give you his or her birthright. An infernal power might have granted it to you at a price, or to spite another such power—which might have made you an enemy. Now that you have it, you wield it to your advantage with the same skill and panache that let you acquire it in the first place.

Broken Mirror Path Features

Additional Misfortune (11th level): You can use the *mantle of misfortune* feat power one additional time each encounter.

Mirror Action (11th level): When you spend an action point, you can slide each enemy within 2 squares of you 1 square or knock that enemy prone.

Deadly Misfortune (16th level): When you slide a creature as a result of your *mantle of misfortune* power, that creature also takes damage equal to your Charisma modifier.

Broken Mirror Powers

Turathi Assault Broken Mirror Attack 11

Your inherited power burns your target's mind with fear, and shrouds it with ill luck.

Encounter
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: If you hit with the next at-will attack you make before the end of your turn, the target you hit takes 2d8 extra damage and falls prone.

Aura of Flawed Nature Broken Mirror Utility 12

You surround yourself with ill luck and ruination.

Daily
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you radiate an infernal energy that twists your enemies' fortunes for the worst. Each enemy that starts its turn within 2 squares of you takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and defenses until the start of your next turn. When an enemy ends its turn within 2 squares of you, you can slide it 1 square.

Sustain Minor: The effect persists.

Cloud of Misfortune Broken Mirror Attack 20

You encase your foe in a cloud of ill luck so potent it is almost palpable, and it and its friends stumble through every action.

Daily
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: If you hit with the next at-will attack you make before the end of your turn, the target of that attack takes 3d10 extra damage and falls prone. Regardless of whether you hit, until the end of the encounter, when the target of the attack misses with an attack, you can slide the target 2 squares.

Special: You cannot use *Turathi assault* and *cloud of misfortune* on the same turn.

About the Author

Peter Schaefer fights with the accuracy of six elves, the endurance of two dwarves with extra temporary hit points, the wisdom of that deva that won't leave you alone, the martial focus of a githzerai monk with extra action points, and the creativity of a halfling-gnome crossbreed. In his eternal war against Thought Queen Mentassis, he recruits allies through messages hidden in the projects he works on as an RPG developer, such as *Adventurer's Vault 2*, *Divine Power*, and many *D&D Insider* articles. When he has found enough stalwart, skilled allies in his unending conflict, he shall engage a paradigm shift that will render Mentassis powerless.

Winning Races: Dwarves

The Forgeborn

By Robert J. Schwalb

Illustrations by Alex Aparin

The forgeborn dwarves remember well the wrongs done to them in ancient times. In scrolls and stories, they recall the exploitation they endured under their giant masters and the betrayal done to them by their maker, Moradin. Having broken their chains during the Age of Strife, they look back on their flight with both pride and regret. They are proud of their legacy, having killed many giants in their flight, but they lament those dwarves they left behind. That many survivors from those dark days live on as azers and galeb duhrs fill the forgeborn with dreadful shame.

The exodus from the giant overlords came too late for many forgeborn dwarves, because the latent elemental energies suffusing them during their labors left them forever after altered in subtle ways, yet these changes are important enough that the forgeborn stand apart from their fellow dwarves to this day. The forgeborn stand in two worlds, their natural heritage warring with the elemental cancer seeking to consume them. To retain their freedom and their identities, each forgeborn dwarf struggles and is never far from the doom that might one day see them all destroyed.

Play a forgeborn dwarf if you want . . .

✦ To avenge those dwarves who languished in service to the giants and their wicked allies.
✦ To call upon the elements to scourge your enemies.
✦ To be a member of a race that favors the druid, barbarian, and warden classes.

Physical Qualities

Most forgeborn dwarves can pass for common dwarves. They share the same height and weight, live just as long, and their equipment, arms, and armor are of dwarven make. However, forgeborn dwarves are hairless, and often tattoo their scalps with clan symbols or markings to track their kills. Forgeborn dwarves are also sometimes called gray dwarves because their coloration never ventures far from gray, ranging from pale granite to dark slate.

Playing a Forgeborn Dwarf

Forgeborn dwarves are powerful warriors, constant and steadfast companions, and dependable allies. Forgeborn dwarves keep their shame fixed firmly in their minds and strive to overcome by redemption the memory of those dwarves they left behind to become the present-day azer and galeb duhr. Honor is everything to the forgeborn, and many spend their lives struggling to live up to the lofty expectations they set for themselves.

The forgeborn dwarves see it as their purpose to cleanse the stains from their people's history and to repair the record through their achievements. They are given to fearsome outbursts and unprovoked aggression, but they wrestle with their fury, knowing it comes from the touch on their heart and bodies by the cruel elemental powers. At times, though, the hatred gets away from them, as numerous dead orcs, giants, ogres, and other foul scions of their ancient oppressors can all testify.

Unlike common dwarves, the forgeborn have little use for the gods, especially for Moradin. They blame the Forge Father for the horrors visited upon them at the world's dawn. Rather than bow and scrape to an unworthy deity, they look to their ancestors for guidance by calling them forth with potent rituals to gain their advice and encouragement, and to dispel their doubts and renew their commitment to righting the wrong done to them as a people. As a result, many forgeborn dwarf adventurers favor classes using the primal and psionic power sources.

Forgeborn dwarves and common dwarves do not mix well. The trouble stems from the dwarves' clear conscience. Most common dwarves look back to their ancient history with anger, but they do not take blame for the troubles befalling their people. Forgeborn, on the other hand, are gripped with guilt that they could free all the dwarves, and as long as any dwarf, even corrupted dwarf, remains in chains, the forgeborn will never halt their crusade. Dwarves who do not share their zeal are cowards, and such accusations frequently result in violence.

Dwarven naming conventions, including clan names, extend to the forgeborn. Personal accomplishments are important to forgeborn dwarves, and they often include them when they introduce themselves.

Forgeborn Dwarf Characteristics: Arrogant, courageous, dour, driven, impatient, proud, taciturn, tempestuous

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Forgeborn Dwarf Backgrounds

A forgeborn dwarf has access to the following background elements.

Disgraced Scion

You broke with your people's traditions, abandoning their guilt and shame to seek your own path. So ingrained are these beliefs in the forgeborn, something significant must have happened to change your outlook. You might have witnessed azer cruelty, seen how galeb duhrs aid their giant masters, or tried to help an azer and found your assistance unwelcome. How did you leave your people? Did you creep away, make a scene, or were you forced out? How do you deal with your newfound isolation? What objective has replaced the one you left behind?

Associated Skills: Dungeoneering, Nature

Keeper of Hate

Forgeborn dwarves rely on the Keepers of Hate to maintain the ledgers in which they record the wrongs done to their clans. You spent your youth training to join their ranks, during which time you studied the ancient texts and learned to despise those ancient foes. Such indoctrination does not leave its students unchanged. How does your upbringing shape your present views? Is there one particular group for which you harbor a special grudge? What would happen when you encounter the object of your hate? Since you are no longer serving as a Keeper, what drew you from the stronghold? Are you on a mission? Or are you a survivor from an attack?

Associated Skills: Arcana, Intimidate

Orc Slayer

All forgeborn warriors must contend with the elemental corruption inside them, but not all are so successful in containing their hatred. War masters channel this destructive energy into useful ways, assembling strike teams to hunt down and destroy orc tribes. These missions have a high attrition rate, so only the most reckless and crazed warriors are chosen. You were such a warrior, but unlike your peers, you survived. You might have lived because no enemy could stand against you. You might have been lucky. Or, perhaps you were recruited for the mission and had no business being amid the other berserkers, and somehow escaped the fighting. How do you look on your good fortune? Have you returned to your people? If not, how would they greet you?

Associated Skills: Intimidate, Nature

Fireforged Champion

"What better weapon to use against our hated oppressors than the curse they foisted on us?"

Prerequisite: Forgeborn Heritage

The ancient curse forgeborn dwarves carry manifests itself in different ways. Although united in their uncommon appearance and the single-minded zeal with which they attack their enemies, a few dwarves, often the greatest heroes in their clans, manifest incredible power on the battlefield. When the fury is upon them, their bodies erupt in brilliant flames, obscuring their forms and scorching their enemies. Few forgeborn dwarves endure these transformations. Even the healthiest dwarves cannot withstand the fires burning within them for long, but a rare few learn to control the flames and to use them when most needed so they can destroy the foes they despise.

Fireforged Champion Path Features

Forged in Flame (11th level): Increase your resistance to fire by one-half your level, and your attacks ignore an amount of fire resistance equal to your level.

Scorching Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an extra melee attack and you hit with this attack, each enemy adjacent to your target takes 10 fire damage. At 21st level, increase this to 15 damage.

Fire for Blood (16th level): While you are bloodied, any creature that starts its turn in a square adjacent to you takes 5 fire damage. This damage increases to 10 at 21st level.

Fireforged Champion Powers

Forge Strike — Fireforged Champion Attack 11

Brilliant flames erupt from your body, flashing with such intense heat that your enemies recoil.

Encounter ✦ Fire, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength, Constitution, or Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength, Constitution, or Wisdom modifier damage.
Effect: Each creature adjacent to you takes 5 fire damage. Your square and each square adjacent to you fills with smoke until the start of your next turn. These squares are lightly obscured.

Burning Recollection — Fireforged Champion Utility 12

Although death closes on you, you recall the grudges you hold and gain strength from the fires of your hate.

Daily
No Action **Personal**
Trigger: You make a death saving throw
Effect: You automatically roll a 20 on the death saving throw.

Form of the Forge Spirit — Fireforged Champion Attack 20

The wrongs done to you and your people causes fire to spill from you in a violent flood until all is ashes and ruin around you.

Daily ✦ Fire, Polymorph
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You assume the form of the forge spirit until the end of the encounter. While you are in this form, your melee attacks deal 5 extra fire damage.

Once during this encounter, you can make the following attack while you are in this form.

Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Strength, Constitution, or Wisdom + 9 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d10 + Strength, Constitution, or Wisdom modifier fire damage, you push the target 5 squares, and the target takes ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Heroic Tier Feats

Ancestral Wrath

Prerequisite: Forgeborn Heritage
Benefit: While you are bloodied, you gain a +1 bonus to speed.

Forgeborn Heritage [Dwarven Bloodline]

Prerequisite: Dwarf
Benefit: You gain the *elemental legacy* power. You also gain resist 2 to acid, cold, fire, and lightning damage. This resistance increases to 3 at 11th level and 5 at 21st level.

Elemental Legacy — Forgeborn Racial Power

You allow the hated elemental energy in your soul to swell forth and scour your foes.

Encounter ✦ Acid, Cold, Fire, or Lightning
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You hit an enemy with an attack
Effect: Your attack deals 3 extra acid, cold, fire, or lightning damage to the enemy.
Level 11: This attack deals 6 extra damage.
Level 21: This attack deals 9 extra damage.

Iron Hide Resilience

Prerequisite: Forgeborn Heritage
Benefit: Increase the resistance you gain from Forgeborn Heritage to 5. This resistance increases to 10 at 11th level and to 15 at 21st level.

Keen Hatred

Prerequisite: Forgeborn Heritage
Benefit: When you use *elemental legacy*, you also gain a +2 bonus to your next attack roll before the end of your next turn.

Wrathful Legacy

Prerequisite: Forgeborn Heritage
Benefit: The first time you are bloodied in each encounter, you regain the use of *elemental legacy*.

Paragon Tier Feats

Improved Legacy

Prerequisite: 11th level, Forgeborn Heritage
Benefit: Increase the extra damage you deal with *elemental legacy* by 4. At 21st level, it instead increases by 6.

Wrathful Resurgence

Prerequisite: 11th level, Forgeborn Heritage
Benefit: When you use your second wind, you also gain temporary hit points equal to half your healing surge value.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer whose more recent work can be found in *Martial Power 2*, *Draconomicon 2*, and *Primal Power*. Robert lives in Tennessee.

Channel Divinity: Kord's Fury

By Robert J. Schwalb
Illustration by Eric Belisle

Thunder echoes across the countryside. Threatening dark clouds tumble down from the frozen north. Rain lashes the shores, while reavers on dragon-prow ships scour the seas, searching for glory, battle, and plunder. Smoke and death drifts on the wind, carrying with them the sounds of clashing steel and death cries from the fallen. And in all these things is Kord—he who is named Storm Father, Lord of Battle, and Warmaster.

Kord is no god for the faint of heart. Weakness has no place in the Storm Father's eyes. Kord demands prowess, courage, and strength in his followers, but he offers much in return—with power and glory at the forefront. For all his ferocity, Kord is not wanton in his destruction—such slaughter is best left to lesser gods. Wisdom tempers his wrath, and he is quick to offer mercy to those who admit they are less than he. In this way, Kord is an honorable warrior, but he is also no fool. Those who cross him find swift and final death because Kord brooks no betrayal and punishes all who wrong him and his own.

To be accepted into Kord's service requires much from the petitioner. A devotee must demonstrate strength, courage, and ferocity—qualities Kord respects. Moreover, candidates must display devotion to excellence in all they do. Often, priests undergo punishing rites and trials to test their endurance. They might quest against the Warmaster's enemies, withstand brutal beatings by elder priests, and spend countless hours training with myriad weapons. Those who fail are never scorned, but they are praised for their willingness to try. Those who succeed are welcomed with great celebration into the Battle Lord's retinue.

Kord's Prayers

The following new prayers offer options for any priests who favor bold action and brutal attacks when confronting their foes, though priests devoted to Kord might be most appropriate.

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Avenger Prayers

Raging Tempest — Avenger Attack 1

The storm's fury sears an enemy with divine wrath and echoes with booming thunder if your allies follow your lead.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Lightning, Thunder, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Wisdom modifier damage plus 1d6 lightning damage. The next time the target takes damage from an attack before the start of your next turn, it takes 1d6 extra thunder damage.
Special: You can use this power in place of a melee basic attack when charging.

Storm Father's Favor — Avenger Attack 5

Lightning explodes from your weapon and thunder sounds all around. The combination indicates your god's anger and means doom to your enemies.

Daily ✦ Divine, Lightning, Thunder, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Wisdom modifier lightning damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Until you do not make an attack against the target on your turn, any enemy other than the target that ends its turn adjacent to you or the target takes thunder damage equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Peal of Thunder — Avenger Attack 7

When an enemy interferes with your attack, you release divine fury in flashing lightning.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Lightning
Immediate Reaction **Close** burst 5
Trigger: An enemy other than your oath of enmity target hits you with an attack.
Target: The triggering enemy
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier lightning damage, and you push the target 3 squares. You also pull your *oath of enmity* target 3 squares.

Cleric Prayers

Mighty Hew — Cleric Attack 1

Your mighty strike prevents the foe from making an effective attack.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Immediate Interrupt **Melee** weapon
Trigger: An enemy hits an ally with an attack
Target: The triggering enemy
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target deals half damage to your ally with the triggering attack.

Gift of Incomparable Strength — Cleric Attack 1

Divine energy flows through your body, and you call out a fierce challenge to a foe facing you.

Daily ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target is marked until the end of the encounter.
Miss: Half damage, and the target is marked until the end of your next turn.
Special: You can use this attack in place of a melee basic attack when charging.

Focus of Cascading Power — Cleric Attack 3

One strike transforms you into a living focus of building power that reveals itself in your ally's next attack.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage. Until the end of your next turn or until an ally within 5 squares of you misses with a melee attack, each ally within 5 squares of you gains a power bonus to melee damage rolls equal to your Charisma modifier.

Invoker Prayers

Rolling Thunderstrike — Invoker Attack 5

The heavens split with lightning and thunder and a storm that originates from your divine will rolls over your foes.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement, Lightning, Thunder
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 4d6 + Wisdom modifier lightning damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, any enemy that ends its turn adjacent to the target takes 1d6 + your Constitution modifier thunder damage.

Lightning Spike — Invoker Attack 7

Lightning sizzles across the battlefield and erupts in a brilliant flash to dazzle nearby foes.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Lightning
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d8 + Wisdom lightning damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Stormclaw — Invoker Attack 13

Dark clouds swirl around you and from them issues a clawlike lightning bolt that reaches out to wrench your enemy away.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Lightning
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d8 + Wisdom modifier lightning damage, and the target slides 2 squares. Any creature that starts its turn adjacent to the target takes 5 lightning damage.

Blessing of the Storm Father Invoker Utility 16

The enemy strikes you, but Kord girds you with the storm's power, ensuring you will stand fast to destroy those who offend you.

Daily ✦ Divine
Immediate Interrupt **Personal**
Trigger: An enemy damages you with an attack
Effect: You gain temporary hit points equal to your healing surge value. Add the lightning and thunder damage types to the next attack you make before the end of your next turn. The power also gains those keywords. If the next attack you make before the end of your next turn hits the triggering enemy, it is dazed (save ends).

Paladin Prayers

Driving Blades Paladin Attack 1

Such is the ferocity of your attack, your enemy falls back with each strike.

Daily ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends). Each time you hit this target with a melee attack while it is taking ongoing damage from this attack, you can push the target 1 square and shift 1 square into the square it vacated.
Miss: Half damage, and you push the target 1 square.
Special: You can use this attack in place of a melee basic attack when charging.

Kord's Strength Paladin Utility 2

Kord answers your shouted prayer with strength and power, causing you to excel in acts of physical might.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You would make an Athletics check or an Endurance check
Effect: You gain a +5 power bonus to the triggering skill check. Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +2 power bonus to melee damage rolls, and targets you hit with melee attacks are subject to your divine sanction until the end of your next turn.

Fury of the Battle God Paladin Utility 6

Failure breeds frustration and frustration breeds unchecked fury, which you channel into your ability to wound your foes.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Free Action **Personal**
Trigger: You miss a target with a paladin encounter or daily attack power
Effect: The targets you missed with the power are subject to your divine sanction until the end of your next turn. You gain a +2 power bonus to damage rolls on the next attack you make before the end of your next turn.

Holy Outrage Paladin Attack 9

Your god's angers shines from you in blazing light that intensifies with each strike you make.

Daily ✦ Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage.
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, whenever you hit an enemy with a melee attack, each enemy adjacent to you other than the target of your attack takes radiant damage equal to your Wisdom modifier.
Sustain Minor: The effect persists.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer whose most recent work can be found in the *Player's Handbook*™ 3, *Martial Power*™ 2, and *Draconomicon*™ 2: *Metallic Dragons*.

Where Do I Come From?

By Peter Schaefer

Illustration by Eric Belisle

Every hero comes from somewhere. Many rise from humble beginnings to become defenders of the realm, others have the benefit of high station and deep pockets as they become renowned adventurers. Almost all encounter great difficulties on their paths to heroism, events that challenge them and shape their futures.

This modified background system provides you with a method for generating formative or pivotal events in your character's past. It can replace or supplement other methods of choosing a background.

When you generate your character, instead of choosing backgrounds, roll once on each of the four tables below. Each table represents a period of your character's life. Use the results to inform how you play your character. You can also choose a result from each table instead of taking a random result.

Once you have generated a result from each table, you can choose one of the following background benefits:

✦ Gain a +2 bonus to checks with a skill associated with your background.
✦ Gain a +1 bonus to checks with one skill associated with your background and a +1 bonus to checks with another skill associated with your background.
✦ Add a skill associated with your background to your class's skills list before you choose your trained skills.
✦ Choose one language connected to your background. You can speak, read, and write that language fluently.

ROLL ONE: PARENTAGE

1d10	Background
1	**Impoverished: Your parents were dirt poor and couldn't provide you with a thing. Did you resolve to do better for yourself or for your parents?** *Associated Skills:* **Endurance, Streetwise.**
2	**Orphan: You were left in an orphanage with no trace of your parents. Have you sought information regarding your lineage?** *Associated Skills:* **Bluff, Insight.**
3	**Ill-Omened: When you were born, the moon turned red or birds died mid-flight and fell from the sky. Do the omens still strike you? Have you learned to read them?** *Associated Skills:* **Arcana, Religion.**
4	**Noble: You were born into a family of wealth and power. Which great family is it, and what is the source of their wealth?** *Associated Skills:* **Diplomacy, Perception.**
5	**Draconic Adoption: You were adopted by a dragon. What sort of dragon was it, and how did it treat you?** *Associated Language:* **Draconic.** *Associated Skill:* **Arcana.**
6	**Cult Raised: An abyssal cult purchased you to raise as one of their own, possibly to use as a weapon someday. Did you resist your lessons, or did you only repent later?** *Associated Language:* **Abyssal.** *Associated Skills:* **History, Religion.**
7	**Monk Business: The quiet people of a monastery raised you and taught you their ways. Are you still in touch with the monks, and what philosophies did they espouse?** *Associated Skills:* **Heal, History.**
8	**Minstrel Family: Your family traveled and performed for your supper. Now that you have moved on, how is the troupe getting on?** *Associated Skills:* **Acrobatics, Diplomacy.**
9	**Raised by Wolves: You crawled, then ran, with a pack of wild animals. Do you have great respect for the beasts, or are you putting that phase of your life behind you?** *Associated Skills:* **Intimidate, Nature.**
10	**Immortal Guardians: Angels raised you for a higher purpose, though whether you were taken from or given by your parents is a mystery. Do you know your purpose?** *Associated Skills:* **Arcana, Religion.**

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ROLL TWO: EARLY LIFE

1d10	Background
1	**Isolated: You were unable or not permitted to associate with many people. Was the isolation well meant or cruel?** *Associated Skill:* **Perception.**
2	**Well-Loved: Everyone wanted to be your friend, or at least thought to be your friend. Did you resent their false attention, or did you revel in the power the attention gave you?** *Associated Skills:* **Diplomacy, Insight.**
3	**Social Outcast: You were the butt of many jokes and treated poorly by your peers. Have you revenged yourself on your tormentors, or have you moved past the pain?** *Associated Skills:* **Bluff, Intimidate.**
4	**Kidnapped: Someone took you from the life you knew to give you another one. Did you ever return? Is your kidnapper still out there?** *Associated Skills:* **Acrobatics, Stealth.**
5	**Test Subject: You were subjected to tests arcane or alchemical, probably against your will. Do you still have visible signs of the testing, such as glowing eyes or a reverberating voice, and who performed these experiments on you?** *Associated Skills:* **Arcana, Thievery.**
6	**Lost Everything: A ruthless attack by monsters robbed you of all you knew. What sort of vengeance do you plan for the creatures that did this?** *Associated Skills:* **Endurance, Nature.**
7	**Invited Underground: A band of mischievous dwarves accept you into their band of troublemaking misfits for a while. Where are they now? What was their leader's name?** *Associated Skills:* **Dungeoneering, Streetwise.**
8	**Imprisoned: Rightly or wrongly, you were convicted of a crime and thrown in prison. How did being in prison at such a young age make you the person you are now, and when and how were you granted your freedom?** *Associated Skills:* **Athletics, Thievery.**
9	**Divine Companionship: You spent some time in the company of a god, exarch, or other divine influence. Do you feel more blessed than most? Do you know why this power took an interest in you?** *Associated Skill:* **Religion.**
10	**Child Prodigy: Your talents were recognized early and lauded by your community, which was very impressed with you. Did you resent it or love it? Do you still try to impress people with these skills?** *Associated Skills:* **Athletics, History.**

ROLL THREE: PIVOTAL EVENT

1d10	Background
1	**You Kill: Through accident, error, or misbegotten intention, you were responsible for the death of an ally, friend, or loved one. Who was it, and how does it torment you?** *Associated Skills:* **Bluff, Heal.**
2	**Murder: Tragedy—and a villain—took the life of a family member or close friend. Who died, and what do you wish you'd told that person? Did the murderer get away with the crime?** *Associated Skill:* **Perception.**
3	**You Die: You died, either through foul play or by accident, and some person or event brought you back to life. Do you know what returned you from the dead?** ***Associated Skills:*** **Endurance, Heal.**
4	**Unwholesome Journey: The Far Realm claimed you, and you wandered there for a time. Did your time there make you stronger of mind, or weaker? Did it alter your worldview?** *Associated Language:* **Deep Speech.** *Associated Skill:* **Dungeoneering.**
5	**Escape: You managed to escape from your previous life, which might have been miserable or just stifling. Whom did you leave behind, where did you end up, and how do they feel about your escape?** *Associated Skills:* **Athletics, Stealth.**
6	**Divine Decree: A god or godly envoy gave you a quest, which you dare not refuse. Who was it, and how much progress have you made since then?** *Associated Skills:* **Religion, Nature.**
7	**Portal Mishap: You were teleported across the world to an unfamiliar place far from home. Did you return home, or are you still in that distant land?** *Associated Skills:* **Diplomacy, History.**
8	**Amazing Creation: Your research bore fruit, and everyone wants a taste. The magic item or ritual you created has been stolen, or people want to steal it. What was your creation, and why did so many people want it?** *Associated Skills:* **Arcana, Stealth.**
9	**Transformation: A magical accident transformed you into another creature. (You might still be that creature if it is a PC race.) What is your old form and what is your new form? What are your fondest and worst memories from that period?** *Associated Skills:* **Insight, Intimidate.**
10	**Possession: You spent a period possessed by a demon, unable to prevent the atrocities it committed with your body. Are you trying to correct the wrongs your body performed? Are there places where you are known as a villain?** *Associated Language:* **Abyssal.** *Associated Skills:* **Arcana.**

ROLL FOUR: RECENT LIFE

1d10	Background
1	**Teambuilding Exercise: You were traveling in search of allies. Did you find anyone before your current group, and was there something specific you were looking to accomplish or find?** *Associated Skills:* **Diplomacy, Streetwise.**
2	**Lost in the Feywild: After stepping through a portal to the Feywild, you were unable to find your way back. How did you finally return?** *Associated Language:* **Elven.** *Associated Skills:* **Nature.**
3	**Fighting Undead: Servants of a great necromancer plagued the land, and you fought the threat. Has it been defeated?** *Associated Skill:* **Religion.**
4	**Freeing Slaves: You were working to abolish the slave trade within a local community. Did you succeed?** *Associated Skills:* **Diplomacy, Thievery.**
5	**Mercenary Work: The money was good enough to justify taking continued employment as a paid soldier. What contacts do you retain from that time?** *Associated Skills:* **Athletics, Endurance.**
6	**Spreading the Word: Wherever you have gone, you have done the work of your deity. Have you won converts or made enemies?** *Associated Skills:* **History, Religion.**
7	**Peaceful Life: You chose a quiet life of farming, keeping a shop, or running the family business. What ended that period for you?** *Associated Skills:* **Athletics, Insight.**
8	**Valued Prisoner: You were one of a few prisoners kept in good health because of information you possessed. What did you know, and did you spill it?** *Associated Skills:* **Streetwise, Thievery.**
9	**Explorer of the Ancient: The rich history and great treasures of lost civilizations attracted your attention and your effort. How did you spend the treasure from your big finds?** *Associated Skills:* **Dungeoneering, History, Thievery.**
10	**Demon-Hunter: You traveled the world, hunting demons and forcing them back into the Abyss where you could. How many notches are on your belt?** *Associated Skills:* **Arcana, Endurance.**

About the Author

Peter Schaefer insists on self-sufficiency in all ways. He wears only clothes he has sewn from fibers he has woven from plants he has grown or animals he has raised. He eats only meals he has prepared from fruits, vegetables, and animals he has raised. He also works on as an RPG developer on books such as *Adventurer's Vault 2*, *Divine Power*, and many *D&D Insider* articles.

Dungeon Tiles

By Peter Lee
Illustration by Jason A. Engle

Quite a few articles have been written here on designing and developing monsters and heroes. Today we look at the design and development of the arena where they fight: Dungeon Tiles!

What Type of Game Components are Dungeon Tiles?

While sitting down to design tiles for an upcoming tile set, I asked myself a question: what exactly am I designing? What is the nature of a set of *Dungeon Tiles?* They are components to a game, but they aren't a game on their own. There are no rules to design. In reality, tiles are objects to support Dungeons & Dragons play. The closest appropriate term is that I'm designing a toy, despite the childish connotation of the word.

Bear with me—I'm not crazy. Think of wooden blocks, model kits, and TinkerToys. Those are toys for exploration, construction, and discovery much like a set of dungeon tiles. When I was a child in the late '70s, I had a set of regular wooden blocks that I used to create sprawling wooden landscapes for my collection of Star Wars action figures. (One day I built the Death Star, a wooden tower that must have been over 6 feet tall. While Princess Leia was held captive in the detention area on the bottom of the tower, an X-Wing crashed into the stack of blocks, literally shattering the poor princess into a million shards. Oops.) Dungeon tiles are much the same thing: a way to create an environment for use with other toys (miniatures) for make-believe play (D&D).

You interact with dungeon tiles twice: when the Dungeon Master builds the encounter area and when the players interact with the encounter. Tiles need to be fun for each use. The Dungeon Master should be able to quickly construct the required space for encounters as well as draw inspiration from the tiles themselves, and the players must be able to interact with the terrain in fun and meaningful ways.

To be fun for the Dungeon Master, a *Dungeon Tile* set must balance between being flexible and being easy to use. The most flexible set would be a set of 1-inch squares, allowing you to create any map you wish—but this would take far too much time when setting up a new encounter in the middle of a game. The easiest "dungeon tile" to use is actually a pre-drawn battle map, but it's not very flexible. There's really only one way to use it (two if you include flipping it over.) *Dungeon Tiles* need to meld both of these qualities.

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To be fun for the players, a *Dungeon Tile* set needs to evoke an exciting encounter space. That means nooks and crannies for rogues to hide in, choke points for fighters to defend, and so forth. The Dungeon Master needs to be aware of these issues when designing encounters, but the *Dungeon Tiles* need to make those possibilities easy to spot and use.

How Does the Design Process Start?

The general subject matter of a *Dungeon Tile* set is decided early in the process, but most of the details are left to the designer. Some sets have a bit of direction. *Halls of the Giant Kings* was directed to be a basic set with a wide variety of generic tiles, while *Streets of Shadows* was clearly aimed at representing city streets and sewers. Other sets have less specific goals: *Caves of Carnage* was simply a cavern set; the underground river came later in the design.

Once a general theme is chosen, the designer starts exploring the space. What will make this a set suitable for fun encounter design? My favorite way of using dungeon tiles is to just grab a handful and start placing them, watching the encounter space appear before me. Designing for a new set is a bit like that. Start with a theme, sketch out a ton of variations on that theme on prototype tiles, and then test those prototypes by seeing what types of encounter spaces evolve by simply drawing and placing tiles.

For *Caves of Carnage*, I drew inspiration from tile-laying board games, creating a simple set of tiles to produce large, cavernous rooms. Taking a cue from *Streets of Shadow*, most tiles in *Caves of Carnage* have a wet and a dry side; you simply turn over the tile to get the alternate art style.

One of my favorite types of tile is an artistic transition tile that bridges the style of two different environments. These tiles thematically link environments and elevate the usefulness of both types. They inspire encounters that occur on those transitions: kobolds guarding the entry to their cavernous lair, thieves watching over a sewer entry to their underground hideout, or the guard standing watch by the wall that protects the inhabitants from the encroaching darkness.

One or Two Sets?

One frequent complaint that I've seen on message boards is that one set is not enough. We try to design each set so that you can get full use out of just a single copy, but it is a two-sided product, rather like a book where you can see only the odd pages. While a set is designed so that you can get by with just one copy, we do also think about what becomes possible if you have two.

As always, math is inescapable. The biggest tile we can print contains 80 squares and occupies one entire sheet. With six tiles per set, if every tile was as big as possible, you could lay out an encounter space of 480 squares. Most of the sheets in a set, however, have a bit fewer than 80 usable squares because of space lost to die cutting between smaller pieces. One of our poster-size battle maps has over 600 squares, so to make a layout the same size as a battle map, you need two sets.

What's This Tile For?

Every set seems to have it: the goofy tile. What on earth are you going to use that for? Some are for specific encounter sites; some are for mechanical reasons, such as the Immurement tiles found in *Sinister Woods*; and some just seemed like a good idea at the time. Even a tile that seems useless at first glance should spark inspiration for encounters. The corpse-ridden tiles from *Caves of Carnage* may not be a popular choice, for example, but I've seen them used well as ghoul spawning points in Mike Mearls' lunchtime romp through the Temple of Elemental Evil. I don't think I'd put them in a Master Set, but they do have their place—a quick encounter over battlefield slaughter. (This idea eventually evolved into the popular, common Fallen Corpse miniature found in *Savage Encounters*, which I think is the best representation of a sleeping form or dead body.)

Harrowing Halls: It All Started with a Stairway ...

Harrowing Halls had a slightly different design path from most of the previous sets. I've been playing in quite a few D&D games that have had platforms and staircases. Those rely on an element that our existing dungeon tiles couldn't handle well: height. Inspiration struck early in 2009, and I spent a few nights huddled on the floor cutting up dungeon tiles with a utility knife (over a scrap of cork flooring so as not to damage the carpet). In a few days, I designed a handful of interlocking tiles for constructing 3D objects: doors, stairs, platforms, and so forth. After proposing it to the managers, I got the go-ahead to design two sets including constructible 3D tiles. We looked at a few alternative materials, but cardboard we were already using turned out to be the best choice. It is hefty, sturdy, and structurally sound without being prohibitively expensive.

Since I knew that we were planning the upcoming *Dungeon Tile Master Set*, I didn't want *Harrowing Halls* to be your standard "dungeon" set. The look of the set was instead inspired by the most popular 3D structures: stairs and platforms. These objects reminded me of the grungy saloon seen in your typical western movie. I immediately saw an encounter space in a tavern, complete with a stairway up to a balcony. (I was also struck by Jason Engle's beautiful map for the Inn of the Welcome Wench, found in the DM Rewards adventure *The Village of Hommlet*. Around this time I was finally introduced to the board game *Betrayal at House on the Hill*, and that made the final piece click; this set should also support a D&D-themed manor house. All of these ideas came together for the art order for the set. Once you have *Harrowing Halls* in your hand, try to build some of these locations:

- A popular tavern with private meeting rooms;
- The dining hall and surroundings of a noble's manor house;
- The barracks in the middle of the city;
- The upper level of an inn, including a common room and private rooms.

Using Tiles in Encounter Design: It's All About Choices

Dungeon Tiles are great for building encounters. By following a few suggestions, you can make your battlefield that much more fun.

Avoid Symmetry: A symmetrical battlefield reduces the choices the players can make. A few collapsed pillars or a small alcove makes one side more interesting for heroes who need to take cover.

Create Multiple Paths: A single choke point with no way around other than smashing through the monster may be a fine tactical plan for the defender, but it can quickly devolve into a static and boring encounter. Provide a longer, alternate path so monsters and heroes can try to outmaneuver each other.

Provide Interactive Terrain: A small pit that heroes and monsters can push each other into gives immediate goals for heroes to aim at. Movable terrain is also fun: adding a wagon that the heroes can push down the road and use as cover makes them feel that they can interact with the world.

Ultimately, *Dungeon Tiles* are simply one more tool that increases the fun you and your players have at the table.

About the Author

Peter Lee works as a game designer for Wizards of the Coast, where he splits his time between RPG design and leading the design for **D&D Miniatures**.

2010: Outlook Good

BY SHELLY MAZZANOBLE
illustrations by William O'Conner

My mom took me to a psychic fair for my 12th birthday. Yes, a psychic fair is exactly what you might imagine... if you spent any time imagining psychic fairs. Picture a hotel ballroom teeming with card tables covered in shear, silky fabrics, scented candles, and more crystals than an A-list starlet's red carpet gown. It's quite a show!

Did you know psychics have specialties? Some are better at family dramas or finding missing people or helping discover who your soulmate is... which I guess kind of counts as a missing person. I didn't care about finding my soulmate. I already knew he was Wil Wheaton. What I cared about was discovering which soap opera I'd land my first gig on.

Before the psychic fair, Mom took me to The Bon Ton, a local department store, where I proceeded to get blissfully lost in the aesthetics and accoutrements of the cosmetics department. I zeroed in on a pink bottle adorned with a trellis of bulbous roses. Visions of that bottle atop my white, wicker dresser, nestled alongside my friendship bracelets and the mint Nolan Ryan rookie card that I stole from my brother and promptly stuck a thumbtack through danced before me. I was 12 now. Practically a grown-up, and I needed a signature scent to prove it. I grabbed that bottle and sprayed the new me from head to toe. From permed head to duck-boot-encased toes.

It was February, but we drove to the fair with all the windows down.

"What the hell did you do in there?" my mom asked. "You smell like you got caught in the middle of a tussle between a can of air freshener and an Avon lady."

Clearly Mom wasn't used to me smelling like a grown up.

We checked in at the psychic fair, and after Mom handed over $100 we were assigned a table number. The portal to my future was at table #12. Was that a sign or what? My psychic's name was Jeanne and she was perfect—clashing patterns in cheap silk, blue eye shadow, scarf popping out of her forest of strawberry blonde hair like it was flagging down a rescue helicopter. I shuffled the cards, probably because she couldn't lift them under the weight of all the bangles scaling her wrists. She coughed a few times and took a sip of water.

The cards were laid out in pyramid formation—the *mandala spread* she called it.

She flipped the first card. The Ace of Wands. "You are very creative and inventive."

I nodded. "I'm good at memorizing too!"

She continued. "You are interested in pursuing a career in an artistic field like..." Her divinations were interrupted by a series of rib-shattering coughs. *Her* coughs.

I started looking for my mom to make her to switch psychics with me.

"Like what?" I asked. "Like *All My Children? Days of Our Lives*?"

"Are you wearing perfume?" she asked.

That must be some kind of ancient psychic trick. Asking a question she should be able to answer if she was really a psychic.

Nope, not falling for it. "Uh... no," I answered.

Cough, cough, cough, gag, cough. "Hawwwwwarrrrrrahhhhh!"

"Are you sure?" she asked again. "Because I'm allergic to perfume."

"Oh, hell no!" I said, this time with conviction. Surely I could *lie* the scent of tea rose right out of the room. Allergic or not, I was seconds away from finding my destiny! "I'm *not* wearing perfume!"

"Sorry," she squeaked. "I need my inhaler!

"Don't go!"

But it was no use. She left me in a cloud of rose stink, at a silk-draped card table in a hotel ballroom with no insight into my artistic future. Apparently Jeanne spread the word about the stinky liar at table 12 because I never got a replacement psychic. But Mom got her money back and offered it to me if promised to burn my soiled clothes and never go within 25 feet of a perfume counter ever again.

"I can't believe you lied to a psychic," Mom laughed on our way home. At least I think she was laughing. It was hard to hear with her head out the window.

If you happen to be psychic you'll know why I was blathering on about this. If you're not, I'll tell you. It's almost my birthday! And also because my mom just sent me a beautiful, second hand, crystal ball from a flea market in honor of our one-time tradition. Everyone knows magic items found at flea markets, in attics, or the dirt beneath swimming pools are the real deal. Especially when they come with batteries.

With the New Year comes a deep-seated desire to know what's in store for the next twelve months. So color me clairvoyant as I gaze upon my battery operated crystal ball and make some major predictions for what's in store for D&D in 2010.

FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE EVENTS TEAM

It's not just about the treasure. Okay, it is. And lucky us, because 2010 begins on a prosperous note for Dungeon Masters and players alike. If you're a player with a penchant for the cyclic, get ready for your close up... and loads of loot.

D&D players will finally reap rewards for their gallant efforts! The more adventuring you do, the more repute you'll earn. Soon you'll be heralded across the land! Tickertape parades will commence in your honor! Your fluctuating weight will be scrutinized, analyzed, and criticized on the cover of tabloids! Everyone will be asking "Where did you get that amazing..." Forgive me. You'll have to ask again later. But I am getting a sense that "it" is really cool.

But of course, great reward is not without its challenges. And that's fine, because who wants to be rewarded for laying around on a bedroll and eating trail rations all day? (Okay, other than me.) Brave adventurers, get ready for a steady stream of new adversaries and obstacles. Perhaps it might even feel like a *weekly* stream.

I can only advice you, my fellow D&D soulmages, to round up the party, find a friendly shopkeeper, and accept your mission. You won't be disappointed.

FROM THE DEPTHS OF PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The future is random for players and Dungeon Masters. Once at odds, I see characters and monsters co-existing in the same space peacefully in the distant future. Or rather, *trapped* in the same space. Once they are unleashed, there is no telling what will happen. But wait... there is telling. I'm psychic, remember?

I see *huge* danger for players! Can any good come from this *very rare* occurrence? The future says outlook good... if you're a DM.

Speaking of Dungeon Masters, 2010 might as well be dubbed "The Year of the DM." Characters take heed: This is not good. What I am about to tell you is real. And it is traumatizing. And frightening beyond words (which is unfortunate for a writer).

What incomprehensible fiend has risen from the bowels of the Elemental Chaos? A horrific foe! The most dreaded and dastardly villain of all time! I want to turn away, but I'm paralyzed. Scarier than watching several desperate, delusional women duking it out to marry a guy they've known for eleven days on *The Bachelor*. In hi-def no less! But if I see it, I must report it because that is the code of the psychic. Yes. We have a code.

To be fair, my view of this baddie is partially impeded by a stainless steel thermos and a grease stained Top Pot Doughnut paper bag, but I'm pretty sure I know what, or rather *who*, I'm looking at. And no doubt that sound I hear in the distance is that of Dungeon Masters all over creation cackling with Machiavellian delight.

FROM THE MISTY HALLS OF R&D

My crystal ball reveals recollections from days of yore. Brady Bunches and bell bottoms. Little blue beings living in mushroom houses and Swatch Watches. How am I supposed to tell the future if I keep seeing the past?

This year the past and the present will intermingle. That's right. Guess whose coming to dinner? Or at least a gaming session in your future. I can't tell you (reply hazy) but I do see this blast from the past eliciting joy and reminiscence in the hearts of millions of gamers. Or at least gamers who can't remember life without a microwave or Madonna.

As I gaze even deeper into the future to the past, I see great unrest and turmoil at game tables. Do my eyes deceive, or is that really a teddy bear-toting rat swarm? Did that hibiscus plant just wink at me?

In the midst of mayhem, I see great fun. What's wrong with you people? War is not *fun*! Judgment Day is not for joking! And yet, my crystal ball contradicts this. Perhaps the batteries are burning out. Or maybe R&D is feeling a bit nostalgic...

This predicting the future is fun! Seeing as though I've got a little juice left in the old batteries, I take the liberty of gazing upon the futures of my party-mates.

Always praised for his ability to sing health back to the injured and pacify a villain with a lullaby, Anwar becomes drunk with praise and delusional about his talents. He ditches the Wyld Stallyns in search of fame on a popular talent show where he is viciously mocked by the judges. He retreats back to the Wyld Stallyns, ready to beg for forgiveness, but he finds they'd been on an extended rest and didn't realize he was gone.

Holden decides being an assassin isn't as cool as he thought. He decides to become a warden. But that bores him too. So he tries out gnome avenger and a shifter druid and a hybrid of goliath bear shaman/monk. Finally as an act of mercy, Oso eats him. Then spits him out. Then eats him again.

Aaeon's tough-as-nails exterior begins to wane as he consistently gets knocked around, bloodied, and caught up in the friendly fire of his own party's bursts. Perhaps it's his good karma or maybe just simple math that grants him the lucky recipient of a powerful *divining rod*, allowing him to finally realize his dream to seek great treasures on the white, sandy beaches of Florida. He will continue to suffer from bouts of vertigo.

Sick of being pushed to the sidelines, and begging to see some action, Oso de la Fez ditches the Wyld Stallyns and starts a glam band called *The Familiars*.

Tabitha figures out a way to use more than one daily at each level each day! R&D concedes D&D is way more fun this way and should have listened to the genius wizard all along. R&D begs her to take a job, offering extreme amounts of treasure and renown, but she politely declines. In her honor, the company renames itself Tabitha of the Coast.

Fed up with the Wyld Stallyns' inability to remember what door they already tried, where they are, if they've rested, which daily has been used, whether they've packed a light source, to pick their darn magic items, already, and to level up before the next game, New DM finally reaches his limit and... Outlook not so good.

About the Author

Shelly Mazzanoble is standing by right now to tell you your future. Empower yourself today!

Underdark

BY BART CARROLL & STEVE WINTER

Intrepid explorers brave a strange realm beneath the surface of the world, where they encounter an evil race of dark-skinned elves…

Sound familiar? It should, if you're a fan of folklore and mythology.

This month sees the release of 4th Edition's plunge into the Underdark, the dangerous world beneath the world. In this installment of *D&D Alumni*, we look back at the game's initial forays into the Underdark as well as its first incarnations of the famed dwellers there: the drow.

Historical Background

To reiterate a point made in a past column, part of the game's wonderful depth can be attributed to a world populated from a diverse mix of sources (world religion, horror stories, medieval bestiaries, and of course the designer's own, unique creations). Naturally, other sources included myths, legends, and folktales. In the European tradition, these genres made frequent use of fairies and their fairy kingdom—a land often depicted beneath or otherwise hidden within the mortal world.

The fairy kingdom may have reflected the Dark Age superstition of a still largely untamed wilderness in many parts of the world; in any case, it featured prominently during the later Romantic period with a nostalgic view of things natural and fantastic. The fairy kingdom was a place that mortals entered sometimes willingly, sometimes not. There they encountered beings at best mischievous, at worst outright dangerous (consider Puck, a typical citizen of the fairy world, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). In more recent years, Neil Gaiman's *Stardust* (and the film based on his novel) did an admirable job of taking readers to his version of 'Faerie'.

The Dragon

The three "D Series" modules which continue the former series owe little, if anything, to fiction. Drow are mentioned in Keightley's THE FAIRY MYTHOLOGY, as I recall (it might have been THE SECRET COMMONWEALTH—neither book is before me, and it is not all that important anyway), and as Dark Elves of evil nature, they served as an ideal basis for the creation of a unique new mythos designed especially for AD&D. The roles the various drow are designed to play in the series are commensurate with those of prospective player characters. In fact, the race could be used for player characters, providing that appropriate penalties were levied when a drow or half-drow was in the daylight world.

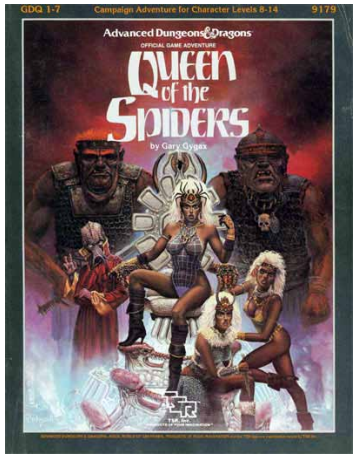
The sketchy story line behind the series was written with the game in mind, so rules and roles were balanced to suit AD&D. It is not difficult to write a tale based on AD&D characters, but it is difficult to try to fit regular characters from an heroic fantasy novel into the AD&D mold. There are exceptions.

***

In Norse mythology, faeries included (and in some ways, were synonymous with) elves—a race of beings divided into the light elves and dark elves. Light elves occupied Alfheim, while the dark elves occupied Svartalfheim, thought of as an underground realm. The dark elves may also have been synonymous with dwarves (who in Norse mythology were called, perhaps not surprisingly, duergar). In *Dragon Magazine* #31, Gary Gygax himself mentioned the literary connections, at least as far as the use of the term drow.

Whether this subterranean realm was a fairy kingdom or the home of the dwarves, it did not bode well for mortal travelers to visit there. Strange events—sometimes wonderful, sometimes terrible—unfailingly took place, presided over by aloof and haughty rulers with great magical power. In short, it made a fascinating setting to convert for use in Dungeons & Dragons.

Original Descent into the Depths



For a great many players, their original descent into the Underdark came from the massive *GDQ1-7* module series. It began with *Against the Giants* and led adventurers to the ultimate source of the evil corrupting Oerth. First came mere hints of the drow, but

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then the action passed through the heart of the drow realm before finally culminating with an assault against their goddess Lolth herself. (As a side note, in the same article in which Gygax mentions the literary background for drow, he also mentions the novel *The Incomplete Enchanter* as influencing the *Giants* series.)

To start with, here's a quick quiz. How did adventurers first reach the Underdark in the *Giants* series?

1. An alcove appears empty but if examined with care, there is a 1-in-6 chance per person examining the area that they will note a thick iron bar protruding from the wall at about 10 feet above the floor. If the bar is moved downward, whatever or whoever is standing on the floor of the alcove is transported to a spot within the Underdark.
2. In the southwest corner of a room is a broken barrel. Actually, the barrel is an illusion; it's really a well-made and watertight cask that contains a map to the Underdark and an obsidian box. In the latter is a chain of weird metal (adamantium alloy) along with instructions which show that the chain is a magical device to be looped into a figure 8. Thus shaped, it will transport up to six persons to the Underdark.
3. Equipment for a pair of hoists (derrick-like machines with straps for cargo of any sort, even large animals) can be found in nooks on either side of a river. It will take several hours to set these hoists into working position, but once done they will not be disturbed. Adventurers will be able to move supplies and pack animals across the river where they can continue the adventure within the Underdark.

Need a hint? What if we said that the river in #3 was actually a river of lava.

So yes, of course the answer is #3, as adventuring parties traveled from the Hall of the Giant King into the cavernous bowels of the world. (For the record, #1 was the means to travel from the Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl to the Steading of the Hill Giant Chief; #2 took you from the Steading to the Glacial Rift.) In the original series, this underground realm was not yet known as the Underdark; in fact, the first adventure there was entitled Descent into the Depths of the Earth—an oddly real-world reference for the game if ever there was one.

Once entered, the following passages first described these caverns beneath the world:

The rock is of all colors, although grays, browns, and yellowish tan are most common. Parts of the route are worked, but much of the tunnels are natural passages, caves, galleries, and so forth. The route always descends. The darkness is not total; there are sometimes patches of phosphorescent lichens, lighting the way with a faint glow (almost like faerie fire).

Swarms of fire beetles pass now and again, and their glowing abdomens shed sufficient light to see clearly. Cave bats flutter overhead periodically, huge ugly things which have forsaken the clean air of the upper world for the foul atmosphere of the subterranean. Now and again a current of dank, cold air can be felt moving downwards and bearing a musty scent throughout the corridors of this dismal underworld.

Should the party ever remain still and listen, they will note many strange sounds: twitterings, squeakings, scrabblings. Various and sundry tiny noises can be heard, noises which are disturbing despite their muted sound.

It's rich narrative, which often made these adventures such glorious reading for the DMs (regardless of how much detail was passed on to the actual players). James Maliszwski, author of the Grognardia blog, noted as much in his "High Gygaxian" article, describing similar language used later in the series for the *Vault of the Drow*.

Then as now, travel within this underground realm offered plenty of hazards: fatal crevasses (110-130 feet deep), sinkholes (10-80 feet deep), and of course its denizens. In the D-series, these included the Warrens of the Troglodytes, the Shrine of the Kuo-Toans, an ungodly assemblage of wandering monsters—and all that before even reaching the vault itself:

The winding, torturous maze of underground tunnels leads finally to this capitol, the last mighty bastion of the drow race on Oerth. All that has gone before was but a prelude, a

series of tests; for herein, deep amidst the realm of the dark elves, dwells the dark Queen herself."

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Drow

Again, the first hint of the dark elves came in the *Giants* series via notes and mysterious temples, finally resulting in a run-in with emissaries from the drow

revealed to be "the primary motivating force behind the entire giant uprising." Eclavdra, the drow priestess, offered players their first look at this fascinating and enviable race.

Described as "black-skinned and pale-haired," the drow soon became one of the game's most famous villains (Grognardia boasts a more extensive pictorial). Their presence could be oddly contentious, triggering endless debates over whether their name should rhyme with "wow" or "woe." (As far as we're concerned, and going back to the earliest days at TSR, the "wow" pronunciation is correct.)

Bringing things back to their folktale counterparts, the following backstory appeared in their 1st Edition *Fiend Folio* entry:

Ages past, when the elvenfolk were but new to the face of the earth, their number was torn by discord and those of better disposition drove from them those of the elves who were selfish and cruel.

However constant warfare between the two divisions of elven kind continued, with the goodly ones ever victorious, until those of dark nature were forced to withdraw from the lands under the skies and seek safety in the realm of the underworld. Here, in lightless caverns and endless warrens of twisting passages and caves hung with icicles of stone, the dark elvenfolk—the drow—found both refuge and comfort. Over the centuries they grew strong once again and schooled themselves in arcane arts. And though they were strong enough to face and perhaps defeat their former brethren in battle, the drow no longer desired to walk upon the green lands under the sun and stars.

They no longer desired a life in the upper world, being content with the gloomy fairyland beneath the earth that they had made their own. Yet they neither forgave nor forgot, and even now, above all else, they bear enmity for all of their distant kin—elves and faeries—who drove them down beneath the earth and now dwell in the meadows and dells of the bright world. Though they are seldom if ever seen by any human or demi-human, the drow still persist, occasionally entering lower dungeon levels and consorting with other creatures in order to work out their schemes and inflict revenge upon those who inhabit the world above.

Much of the drow's attraction did not come from their resonance from folktales, of course. They simply made compelling adversaries in the game, with their hidden society, and—let's be honest—no small amount of weapons and armor that every adventure simply drooled over: adamantite chainmail, elven cloaks and boots, and of course their novel hand-crossbows armed with potent sleep poison. All of which was rendered quickly worthless, once taken back to the surface (as worthless as fairy gold, a further hint of their folklorish connections).

In later products and editions, the drow would become a much-detailed and celebrated race, helped in no small part by the appearance of one dark elf who rejected his Underdark society and made his way to the surface world. But that, perhaps, is a topic for a future column.

About the Author

Bart Carroll is loathsome beyond description and has no redeeming features. His body resembles that of a huge, bloated buffalo and gives off an offensive odor. The author's neck is long and thin, and perched atop it is a big head uglier than that of a warthog. His legs are thick and stumpy, much like a hippopotamus. The author's tail is strong and snakey, however, and moves with amazing swiftness to strike enemies.

Steve Winter is a writer, game designer, and web producer living in the Seattle area. He's been involved with publishing D&D® in one form or another since 1981. Tiny people and monsters made of plastic and lead are among his favorite obsessions.

The New Hotness

BY CHRIS TULACH

illustration by Eric L. Williams

D&D Play Spotlight

D&D Experience and *Player's Handbook* 3 Game Day are right around the corner. This month, we share more detail on our featured winter gaming convention and talk about what's in store at your local store during the first Game Day of the new year!

D&D Experience is Where You Want to Be!

As I discussed last month, our feature convention to kick off 2010 is right up on us – January 28-31 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This is the place to be to get the inside track on what's hot and interact with the Wizards staff. If you're still thinking about attending, here are the details you need about some of our special events. Make sure you sign up by heading to the D&D Experience website today!

Dark Sun: Death in the Arena

Get the first look at the return to Athas as you play through an exciting preview adventure! Each pregenerated character comes loaded with Dark Sun

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preview material – new races, builds, and other exciting rules options come alive as you battle for glory and your lives in the Stadium of Tyr. The future of the Golden City has been thrown into chaos and doubt, and you must negotiate its dangers to survive! 1st-level pre-generated characters are provided. Games run every day from Thursday through Sunday.

Seminars Galore!

Hit up our awesome seminar schedule below to get tons of new information on upcoming releases, pick game designers' brains (not as unappealing as it sounds), and participate in creative workshops. For those of you that can't attend the show, we'll even be podcasting our seminars right on the D&D website!

Thursday, January 28

2010 D&D Product Overview

Find out what the year has in store for the D&D game as we give an overview of the year's upcoming releases. Be here when we unveil secrets of the 2010 product line! The presentation will be followed by a short Q&A on the products. Presented by Mike Mearls and Rich Baker. 1 pm.

2010 D&D Play and Community Overview

If you want to know what's going on in 2010 with D&D Organized Play, including Living Forgotten Realms and our new D&D Encounters program, this is the seminar to attend. In addition, we'll talk about D&D communities and how you can get involved! The presentation will be followed by Q&A. Presented by Chris Tulach and Trevor Kidd. 3 pm.

Friday, January 29

Save My Game!

Do you have a rules question or a problem at your table? Keep the action flowing and get DM tips as we troubleshoot your game and DMing questions. The Wizards staff takes on all questions and gives you answers. Presented by the Wizards Staff. 1 pm.

Adventure Design Workshop

Go beyond the *Dungeon Master's Guide* as Wizards staff members give you a hands-on interactive workshop, discussing adventure design principles while leading the attendees through an audience-created adventure! Presented by Mike Mearls and Robert Schwalb. 3 pm.

Book Signing with Wizards Designers

Mike Mearls and Robert Schwalb will be available to sign D&D books they've designed. Stop on by and bring your books! 5 pm.

Saturday, January 30

Beyond the D&D RPG

Dungeons & Dragons is more than just a roleplaying game, and in 2010, we're expanding the experience even further. Join us as we discuss new expressions for D&D and give updates on some current favorites. Presented by Mike Mearls and Rich Baker. 1 pm.

Athas Unveiled: Dark Sun Returns!

Join Dark Sun lead designer Rich Baker as information on the upcoming *Dark Sun Campaign* Setting is revealed. The harsh world of Athas will be updated to 4th Edition this August, but D&D Experience is your first opportunity to get details about the setting's renewal and the new character options presented in it. Presented by Rich Baker and Robert Schwalb. 3 pm.

Book Signing with Rich Baker

Author and D&D Game Designer Rich Baker will be available to sign copies of the latest books in his series Blades of the Moonsea. Pick up a copy at the show while supplies last! 5 pm.

Sunday, January 31

2010 D&D Product Overview

If you missed the Thursday presentation, you can get it again here. Presented by Mike Mearls and Rich Baker. 1 pm.

Keep an eye out for Wizards folks, ask us questions about the game, and play until your dice are round all weekend long at the show. I hope to see you there!

Worldwide D&D Game Day: Player's Handbook 3

Coming up soon — on March 20 — is the first of what promises to be several Game Days spotlighting hot new releases for the D&D game. Celebrate the launch of *Player's Handbook* 3 and the complete release of all the psionic classes as you participate in an exclusive adventure called "Beneath the Lonely Tower." Want a blurb for the adventure? You got it!

Beneath the Lonely Tower

Written by Erik Scott de Bie

In the frontier village of Beorunna's Well, all is not well. Villagers have disappeared without a trace, and the locals fear to walk alone in the dark. Now, the villagers hear distant cries of terror at night, echoing from an abandoned fortress outside the village. A group of brave heroes must step forward to explore the Lonely Tower and end the threat to Beorunna's Well. "Beneath the Lonely Tower" is a 6th-level adventure with six pre-generated characters included, all using options from the new *Player's Handbook* 3.

Each character presented for play has a new character class from *Player's Handbook* 3; four of the characters use the new races from that book as well! All are presented on fantastic laminated character cards.

In order to get in on the action for Game Day, simply head to your local Wizards Play Network location on Saturday, March 20 for a day of D&D fun. If you don't know where the closest store running D&D Game Day is located, head to the Wizards Store & Event Locator to find it!

That's all for now, but I promise some exciting news in the D&D Play Spotlight next month. Keep an eye on the Wizards site in late January and early February for a sneak peek!

About the Author

Originally thought to have been raised from a humble Midwestern family, **Chris Tulach** actually fell to Earth in a meteorite-shaped capsule flung from a planet far outside our galaxy. While under the yellow rays of Sol, Chris's nerdity far surpasses that of any normal human. Using this precious gift only for good, he has become the D&D Organized Play Content Developer, responsible for the development and deployment of Dungeons & Dragons organized play programs. He is also the co-author of E2 Kingdom of the Ghouls.

New Year, New Experiences

BY BILL SLAVICSEK

A new year blooms, and 2010 is going to be a year full of new experiences related to Dungeons & Dragons. I'm in the mood to show off a couple of the exciting new things we've been working on, and I've finally gotten the go-ahead to reveal the true nature of the cool, limited edition PVC statue (I really can't bring myself to call this gigantic piece of D&D awesomeness a miniature) coming out this year. Let's start with a not-so-little something with a name that rhymes with "Morcus."

It Rhymes with Morcus

Who's your favorite Demon Prince of Undeath? Who controls vast hordes of undead creatures and constantly strives to attain godhood? And who's about to be immortalized in an awesome PVC statue, complete with removable base and double-sized stat card? The answer to all of these questions is Orcus, the wand-carrying Blood Lord and master of the dark realm of Thanatos!

This year, we're proud to release a limited edition version of the gargantuan Orcus miniature. In the near future, we'll announce the specifics concerning the release date and limited edition details, but in the meantime I wanted to show off the amazing sculpt and paint job for this must-own demon lord. With spectacular detail and vibrant colors, what D&D fan wouldn't want to display this impressive statue? And with updated stats, what DM wouldn't want to scare the platinum out of an adventuring party's bag of holding by placing Orcus on the game table? I know that I'm looking forward to just that as my Monday night group strides ever closer to adventure E3: Prince of Undeath. Belkas, you have been warned!

D&D Experiences

In the upcoming year, we're pulling out all the stops to provide you with all kinds of amazing D&D experiences. For example, there's going to be a new way to interact with your favorite elements of the Dungeons & Dragons brand when we release the Dungeons & Dragons *Heroscape Starter Set* later this month and the Dungeons & Dragons *Castle Ravenloft Boardgame* in August. We've got a bunch of other new and exciting experiences coming this year, but let's really kick it off big with Dungeons & Dragons Experience.

This amazing event, which takes place this year in Fort Wayne, Indiana on January 28-31, features a wide variety of great things to do and see related to D&D. Here's a detailed rundown on the show. I also want to take a moment to tell you that we'll be showing off a bunch of new stuff at this event, including the first public play for the upcoming Dark Sun Campaign Setting. You'll get to mingle with such notable members of the staff as Mike Mearls, Rich Baker, Trevor Kidd, Chris Champagne, Bart Carroll, and the indomitable Chris Tulach (among others). Next month, we'll start previewing Dark Sun in earnest, but if you can't wait, get yourself to Fort Wayne and see what all the fuss is going to be about.

Join the D&D Group Page Now

Hey, I'm sure that everyone reading this has already checked out all the fun at the new Wizards Community Site. If not, what are you waiting for? There are blogs, staff pages, personal pages, and all kinds of social networking tools for the best people in the world—D&D people! While you're over there, make sure you join the D&D Group Page. We're running lots of fun promotions and previews there, and we want you to be a part of that. For example, last month we had a "design your own holiday-themed encounter" contest. Head over to the D&D Group Page to find out who won and to see what we're going to do next.

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Dungeon Master for the Stars

Dungeon Master Extraordinaire Chris Perkins (who also happens to be the D&D Creative Manager and a really swell guy) was recently in Los Angeles to run a D&D game for some very funny and creative people associated with the television industry. I can't tell you who these people are just yet, but I can tell you that this will be the subject of an upcoming podcast. And the event could lead to even bigger and better things in the future. We'll be teasing this more on our D&D Facebook page and Twitter, so make sure you're following @wizards_dnd to learn more in the weeks and months ahead.

One of these days we'll get Chris to write about his experiences as a DM for the Stars. As soon as he has a free moment or two, that is.

D&D Chats

Last month, we started a new program of Live Chats with D&D staff members. The first game designer in the chair was Rich Baker, who talked about a number of things near and dear to his heart, including his work on the new *Dark Sun Campaign Setting*. That first chat was extremely successful and a whole lot of fun, so we plan to do more of them moving forward. I'd like to see them happening at least once a month to start, but maybe more often if there's interest.

Your Dungeon—In Glorious 3D!

In March, the release of the Harrowing Halls Dungeon Tiles set debuts the first of our 3D terrain pieces for Dungeons & Dragons. You can build a stairway and four different platforms that can be configured to be one or two squares tall. In addition to these new three-dimensional elements, the set features rooms and hallways that can be used to represent a manor house, a haunted estate, or the favorite inn or tavern of your adventuring party.

That's it for this time out. See you next month.
Until then, Keep Playing!

In Case You Don't Know Him

Bill Slavicsek's gaming life was forever changed when he discovered *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1976. He became a gaming professional in 1986 when he was hired by West End Games as an editor. He quickly added developer, designer, and creative manager to his resume, and his work helped shape the *Paranoia*, *Ghostbusters*, *Star Wars*, and *Torg* roleplaying games. He even found some time during that period to do freelance work for *D&D* 1st Edition. In 1993, Bill joined the staff of TSR, Inc. as a designer/editor. He worked on a bunch of 2nd Edition material, including products for *Core D&D*, *Dark Sun*, *Ravenloft*, and *Planescape*. In 1997, he was part of the TSR crowd that moved to Seattle to join Wizards of the Coast, and in that year he was promoted to R&D Director for *D&D*. In that position, Bill oversaw the creation of both the 3rd Edition and 4th Edition of the *D&D Roleplaying Game*. He was one of the driving forces behind the *D&D Insider* project, and he continues to oversee and lead the creative strategy and effort for *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Bill's enormous list of credits includes *Alternity*, *d20 Modern*, *d20 Star Wars*, *Pokemon Jr.*, *Eberron Campaign Setting*, the *D&D For Dummies* books, and his monthly *Ampersand* (&) column for *Dragon* Magazine.